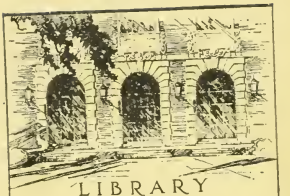

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THE

MUNSTER COTTAGE BOY.

A Tale.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY

REGINA MARIA ROCHE,

AUTHOR OF

THE CHILDREN OF THE ABBEY, TRECOTHICK BOWER, MONASTERY OF ST. COLUMB, &c. &c.

And yet poor Edwin was no vulgar boy. BEATTIE.

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THE

MUNSTER COTTAGE BOY.

CHAPTER I.

" 'Tis not so sweet now as it was before—
Oh, Spirit of Love! how quick and fresh art thou!
That, notwithstanding thy capacity
Receiveth as the sea, nought enters there,
Of what validity and pitch soever,
But falls into abatement and low price,
Even in a minute."

AT length lord Castle Dermot arrived. Scarcely had he received his mother's affectionate welcome, ere he demanded an explanation of the curious incident she had alluded to in her letter, and who the delightful companion was that she said chance had given her. Her ladyship

evaded these inquiries; it was not her intention indeed to be explicit with him concerning Fidelia, convinced that, even by him, thoughtless and giddy as he was, were every circumstance relative to her known, the idea of her sanctioning an attachment between them would be laughed at and ridiculed as one extravagant in the extreme. Laughing at what she styled his feminine curiosity, she proceeded to ask him whether colonel Grandison had urged his coming, as she requested?

"Urged!—no, faith—he did all in his power to prevent me. I never found him so pressing before for my company."

"Kind and obliging indeed!" said her ladyship, resentfully.

"Faith, yes—so I think. I am beginning to fancy," conceitedly pulling up his collar at the glass, "from the circumstance, that I am infinitely more delightful than my modesty would once allow me to imagine."

"Well, we shan't discuss that point at present. I am going to change my dress

for dinner, and when you have done the same, follow to the garden."

"So—I have been finely decoyed here," thought his lordship as she withdrew, "to make up a trio with her sentimental ladyship and some long-waisted, jaundiced-skin piece of stiff celibacy!—Oh! curse me, if it's not too bad! But, faith, I'll soon make myself scarce again, and be off to my charming Caroline."

Having changed his dress, however, he thought proper to follow, as desired, to the garden; not, however, to join her had the countess desired him to follow, but to be surprised with the sight of Fidelia, who had taken a book there.

After sauntering about some time, he espied a white dress through the foliage of a bower.—"So, there sits Miss Frumps," thought he, "amusing herself, I suppose, by a narrative of adventures she has often vainly wished to be the heroine of. Curse me if I interrupt her delectable employment!—Yet, after all, I may as well amuse myself by quizzing the tabby."

He accordingly approached, but at the face that met his view his affected exclamation of rapture was changed into one of real transport.—"Why, good Heavens! is it possible?" he cried; "can I believe my senses? Is it indeed the dear, the lovely girl that I have so long been anxiously seeking after that I see?—But tell me, my charming girl," as he took her hand and passionately kissed it, "may I flatter myself that my rapture is at all mutual?"

"I should be ungrateful to lady Castle Dermot if I was not happy to see her son," returned Fidelia, calmly.

"Oh, curse it! that won't do. Of all obligations, I do not wish to owe her the obligation of being loved only for her sake;" and seating himself, he attempted to enclasp the waist of Fidelia; but, starting from him, she gave him a look that seemed to demand how he dared attempt such an audacity with her, and then rising, quitted the bower.

Lord Castle Dermot followed, uttering

a thousand extravagant compliments. Regardless of them, Fidelia was hastening in, when, to her great relief, they were joined by lady Castle Dermot. Her son, after openly avowing the delightful surprise he had met with, endeavoured to learn how she and Fidelia had become known. She answered him in a manner that gave him to believe it was owing to her seeking for a companion, thus purposely concealing the real fact from him.

How lucky that the one selected by her should be the very one he had long wished to secure himself!—"But now I perceive," he said to himself, as he followed, musing on the fortunate circumstance, "why Grandison was so urgent for me to continue at Rock Fort. Devilish sly, his trying to keep me there! But I'll be even with him for this, as well as other kindnesses. Curse me, if I didn't care twopence for the girl, if I wouldn't try to win her, for the purpose of triumphing over him!—But what an extraordinary being this same lady-mother of mine, to rest not

till she had put me in the way of temptation! Curse me, if I know what to make of the circumstance! However, it shan't be my fault if I don't profit by it."

True to this resolution, his lordship became the absolute persecutor of Fidelia; and her distress at his conduct was increased by her efforts to avoid him being often defeated by the strange interference of the countess; for strange it seemed to her, that, instead of trying to prevent their having opportunities of conversing alone, she should rather furnish them with such. To what could such conduct be owing? Was it really to render Fidelia herself happy, by proving to her she had the most generous confidence in her principles? or else to absolute blindness to the imprudence of it? If, when making an effort to get out unobserved, Fidelia would draw back, on perceiving lord Castle Dermot apprised of her intention and preparing to accompany her, her ladyship, in a tone of evident pique, would say, she was sorry he was considered so

disagreeable a companion, that, rather than allow his attendance, she would give up the enjoyment she sought; thus forcing her, from a fear of otherwise offending, frequently to act contrary to her inclination and judgment. But though teazed by lord Castle Dermot, he had as yet done nothing seriously to offend her. Either awed by her manner, or else afraid of avowing himself, ere flattered with the idea of having gained a little upon her, he as yet confined himself within the bounds of decorum; yet still his looks, his manner, his unceasing indications of admiration, alarmed Fidelia.—"But if he perseveres in these, I will soon settle the matter," she said. Yes—to disclose to the countess the conversation he amused her with in their rambles would certainly be, she conceived, to rescue her from what was so disagreeable: but still, if possible, she wished to avoid the risk of creating any difference between them, and therefore determined to try a little longer whether her persevering reserve would not

have the desired effect. At length becoming hopeless of this, she was meditating how she should apply to the countess for her interference, when a costly set of pearl ornaments, forced upon her by his lordship, furnished her with an opportunity. Such a present must, she thought, open her eyes to the nature of his sentiments for her, and of course occasion a proper remonstrance from her on the subject. Accordingly hastening to her dressing-room with them, she laid them before her, informing her how they had been received, and entreating she would have the goodness to return them to his lordship, her own effort to do so proving ineffectual.

"And why should I do so?" demanded the countess, as she opened the case to examine them. "Is it only the donor gives value to a gift in your eyes? You allowed colonel Grandison, the other day, to present you with some trinkets; but from lord Castle Dermot you reject any similar proof of regard?"

"I—I certainly did," returned Fidelia,

after a momentary confusion. "But what your ladyship alludes to were not expressly purchased for me, but given in consequence of my chancing to admire them particularly, amongst some other gems collected abroad."

"We can easily find pretexts for doing what we like," said the countess. "I own I am a little piqued at your seeming so decidedly to prefer one to the other; on my account, at least, I should have hoped that my son would have been regarded by you. But perhaps colonel Grandison has better insinuated himself into your favour. I should be very sorry to breathe a word to his prejudice, but believe me, his attentions to you can never be of a serious nature; for, with all your attractions, lord Fitzossory never would permit his heir to form an alliance with a woman of unequal rank."

"But what has lord Fitzossory to say to colonel Grandison?" involuntarily demanded Fidelia. "Not, believe me,

ma'am," blushing deeply, "that I have the slightest idea 'tis to me of any consequence to know—I am too well aware of the little right I have to entertain vain or ambitious views, ever to have given way to such."

"What has he to say to him!" repeated the countess. "Why, don't you know that he is his grandfather?"

"No," turning pale, from anticipating a most agitating disclosure, "not till now did I know; nor do I now well comprehend it, always understanding the name of his heir was Morven, not Grandison."

"Both: his father's name is Grandison, but he was christened by the family name of the Fitzossorys; and so hateful is the former to the earl, from circumstances I have not now time to detail, that, in compliment to his prejudices, or rather compliance with his wishes, the colonel is never addressed by it in his presence, and scarcely, I believe, known in his neighbourhood by any other than the one annexed to it."

"Unfortunate mistake!" sighed Fidelia to herself in bitterness of spirit. All that had appeared strange and unjustifiable in the conduct of Mr. Beaumont towards her was now accounted for: he had not falsely accused her of conversing with Morven, while her positive denial of the fact, from knowing him by no other name than that of Grandison, naturally occasioned her to be considered base and perfidious.

She saw she had been the victim of a cruel mistake—a mistake which she knew not whether to acquit Grandison of being accessary to. Why had he allowed himself to be introduced to her friends by one name, and yet let her continue to address him by another? Did not this argue a wish to keep her in error? And to what but some sinister motive could such a wish be owing?—to what his still seeking her when alone? Oh! it was almost evident there was cause for suspicion. But if he was other than he seemed, how ever again durst she judge from appearances? But be what he might—all that was noble in

nature, impassioned in tenderness, or cruel, subtle, and designing—still alike were they sundered by this discovery: in no other way than by henceforth shunning him, could she vindicate herself in the opinion of her early protectors—in no other way prove to her dearest friend, that voluntarily she had not aided in occasioning a pang to her bosom.

Some minutes elapsed ere she at all recovered from the shock occasioned by this discovery. Not a little pained was the countess at seeing her so affected, naturally concluding it was owing to her assertion concerning lord Fitzossory; she tried, however, to flatter herself that the consequent termination of her hopes relative to colonel Grandison would induce her to lend a readier ear to the professions of lord Castle Dermot; almost was she tempted to implore that this might be the case, but checked the impulse, from a fear that even the person flattered by her yielding to it might expose her to ridicule for it. To become a supplicant for her

son, with his expectations, with a poor destitute dependent, would indeed be a circumstance, she could not deny to herself, that must justly draw upon her censure and ridicule; she therefore resolved on still trying to conduct herself in such a manner as should make it appear, or be supposed, that her sanction to their union was the effect of ardent importunities, not premeditation on her part, and thus, as she hoped, be able to save herself from the imputation of folly, if not madness. And had she actually brought herself to think seriously of their union, without even receiving the letter previously required from Mr. Beaumont? At times she could scarcely think herself guilty of such imprudence; but then, self was so much her rallying point—the idea of securing happiness to herself if she secured Fidelia for her son—that she could not bear to relinquish the idea. Married to so unconnected a being as Fidelia, there was but little danger of his being estranged from her, as from allying himself elsewhere

might be the case: yet, could she have devised any other method for securing Fidelia to herself than by marrying her to him, she probably would not have been so anxious for the measure; but by no other chain could she be certain of binding Fidelia for any time to her; and how forlorn had she long been for want of a person, isolated like her, who would be devoted to her!

Anxious to be alone, Fidelia was hastening from the room, when her ladyship prevented her, to say she was going out to pay a distant visit, and that she should accompany her.

Gladly, from the perturbation of her spirits, would Fidelia have excused herself, but she knew not how, and accordingly followed to the carriage that was just at the instant announced, not without a suddenly-suggested hope that reconciled her in a degree to the circumstance, that, in the course of the ride, something might occur to furnish her with an opportunity for coming to an explanation with her

ladyship respecting her son, and thus preventing a longer continuance of her provoking blindness concerning him.

But not more studious was she for this than her ladyship was to avoid it. Should Fidelia complain of the particularity of his lordship, she either must interfere to check it, or else avow her real wishes; and, alike averse to either, she carefully tried to prevent what must reduce her to such a dilemma. But a little while, and she hoped they would yet be so entangled with each other, that her approbation, not angry interference, would be the object of solicitation.

The road they were going was a new one to Fidelia: from listening to some account lady Castle Dermot was giving of the owners of one or two adjacent seats, her attention was suddenly diverted by the sight of an old cross, on a little rocky elevation a few paces from it. Instantly it brought to mind her having come this road before, and that it was the one immediately leading to the house of the per-

son said to be her father, from the circumstance of her nurse having stopped to say a prayer at this ancient relic of superstition, and telling her a curious tradition concerning it.

While lady Castle Dermot was wondering at what she told her, and trying to surmise who her reputed father could be, a gentleman on horseback approached: he was a neighbour and acquaintance of her ladyship, and accordingly both stopped to speak to each other. On his bidding her good-bye, lady Castle Dermot, turning to her companion to resume the conversation he had interrupted, was surprised and alarmed at seeing her leaning against the side of the carriage almost fainting. Eagerly she inquired what was the matter, as she gave her her salts. For a minute Fidelia could not reply; then a little recovering herself, she proceeded to declare she was sure the gentleman they had just parted from was her father.

"Mr. Dundonald your father!" exclaimed the countess, with surprise.

"If that be Mr. Dundonald." replied Fidelia, "there was something in his look, in his accent, that caused both to be indelibly impressed upon my recollection."

"I am indeed amazed at what you say," returned the countess. "But we shall see; rely on it, I will leave nothing undone to ascertain the truth." Then calling to the servant on horseback, she desired him to ride after Mr. Dundonald, and tell him she would be glad to see him in the course of the morning, if convenient; and giving up her intended visit, desired the coachman to drive back.

Mr. Dundonald was not a man to be inattentive to such a message; time had effected as little alteration in his disposition as appearance; he was still a votary of pride and ambition. Amongst his numerous speculations for aggrandizement, more than one had failed, and to remedy the misfortune, he had long meditated an alliance with some woman of fortune. The countess of Castle Dermot possessed all the requisite attractions; but, notwith-

standing his impatience to secure the golden prize, a fear of defeating his wishes, by prematurely seeking to do so, decided him on first trying to secure her regard: but, though assiduous in his attentions for the purpose, he as yet was not sufficiently assured to make his meditated proposal. Lady Castle Dermot indeed had not the slightest idea of changing her state again, or, if she had, it was not such a person as common report represented Dundonald to be that could have tempted her—a selfish and dissipated being could but ill have administered to the happiness of a person not to be satisfied with less than doting tenderness and exclusive attention.

Her ladyship continued with Fidelia till his announcement. She did not keep him long in suspense as to her motive for desiring to see him. His astonishment at what she narrated was unutterable—not that he had ceased to remember the probability of having a daughter in existence, but that he had quite forgot the possibility of her being again thrown upon him.

He certainly had felt some compunctious visitings of nature on her account, but had hitherto studiously resisted their influence, from a fear of injuring himself by yielding to them. For some minutes he remained undecided how to act, forgetting, in the surprise and confusion of his thoughts, that he could not possibly give a stronger proof of his being guilty of what he was accused of than by this hesitation, innocence and truth being ever prompt in answering.

At length, on her ladyship pressing for an answer, in a manner that involuntarily betrayed the extraordinary interest she took in Fidelia, a sudden idea, from this circumstance, of some advantage being likely to accrue to him from the measure, induced him to acknowledge himself the father of the fair fugitive; but to do so without entering into a vindication of his conduct towards her, was not of course thought of. But, ere he attempted this, he deemed it requisite to learn all she knew concerning herself; and having

ascertained this from the countess, he took advantage of her ignorance of any affinity to the Beaumonts to conceal his connexion with them, fabricating, with very little difficulty, a tale wide of the truth, and which of course was not without the inconsistencies generally detected in such.

But to be satisfied that Fidelia was indeed his daughter was almost all that lady Castle Dermot desired, since, once assured of this, she could no longer have any fear about disclosing her real wishes respecting her—wishes which this discovery had not in the least altered, since a father so little known, could scarcely, she thought, be considered by her as more than a mere nominal relation.

But though a selfish motive had induced Dundonald to acknowledge Fidelia to her ladyship, he by no means wished to do so to the public, and accordingly framed such an excuse to her ladyship for his not wishing to do so immediately, as at length to induce her to be satisfied for

the present with the mere acknowledgment of their affinity to Fidelia, herself, and his son; in short, every thing was settled as he wished; and the countess at length left him, to inform Fidelia of the result of their conference, and conduct her to him.

When he saw her, he no longer wondered at what he had previously conceived the romantic interest of lady Castle Dermot for her; yet she recalled to his mind no features interesting from recollection—not a trace of Miss Beaumont was discoverable in her countenance.

Dundonald was certainly not a man of exquisite feeling, but he certainly felt proud of such a daughter, more especially when he found her well-informed, and an adept in all those accomplishments that give additional charms to beauty, and in many instances more than supply the want of it.

Fidelia, it must be supposed, felt joy at no longer having to consider herself an unconnected being; but what she expe-

rienced on the occasion was, like human joy in general, not without alloy. She could place no confidence in the kindness or protection of a parent who appeared to have decided on abandoning her, and the previous discovery of the morning dwelt heavily on her mind. She was not rendered happier, when, on expressing her determination to let the Beaumonts immediately know what had occurred, her father absolutely interdicted her, saying, at a proper time he would himself acquaint them with it, and, till then, desired there might be no further correspondence between them.

Fidelia tried to be obedient; but the idea of being still considered as a base ungrateful creature by them was so painful, so insupportable, that she at length ventured to write a few lines to Mr. Beaumont, merely explanatory of the mistake respecting colonel Grandison, and entreating him to let her statement have the desired effect upon him—that of reinstating her in his good opinion. But, suspecting

she might not conform to his wishes, Dundonald contrived to get this letter into his hands, and thus disappointed the sanguine expectations she had experienced of speedily receiving an answer to it.

In the mean time, the delighted lady Castle Dermot acquainted her son with what had taken place; and concluding he would participate in her feelings at it, was surprised at seeing him listen to it, not merely with calmness, but a look of dissatisfaction. The fact was, an idea of matrimony with any one had never entered his head, and of course he was far from being pleased at a circumstance that threw still greater obstacles in the way of his succeeding with Fidelia as he wished.

"Why, what is the matter?" demanded her ladyship, after a pause. "You don't seem rejoiced at what I have told you. Admiring Fidelia, as I am convinced you do, I thought you would have been happy at a discovery that permits you to think seriously of her."

"To be sure," stammered out his lord-

ship—" that is—if I thought she had any reciprocal regard for me."

" Well, well, you must not despair; and, rely on it, in me you will have a warm advocate."

His lordship tried to express something like gratitude, but with a secret determination that nothing should induce him to resign his liberty. For the present, however, it was requisite this should be kept to himself, lest otherwise Fidelia should be on her guard against his machinations; and besides, for the purpose of mortifying Grandison, he rather wished a report of their being attached to each other to prevail.

Not much better pleased than he was, was Fergus, Dundonald's son, at the circumstance, thinking, as he did, that there were already sufficient drains on the family exchequer. His father understanding his grimaces, told him he need not feel unhappy at it, as there was little danger of any injury to his prospects by it; " for the girl is so devilish handsome," he

said, "that I think one may be sure of getting her off without a fortune."

Again captain Dundonald shrugged his shoulders, and, in the most affected tone imaginable—"Heavens!" he exclaimed, "you really know nothing of the matter, my dear sir. No man in his senses will now marry a handsome woman without a fortune, from knowing the indulgences claimed by such a being, and the cognizance taken by the world of her treatment. An ugly one, indeed, he might, because he knows that, if he made her live like one of the fraternity of La Trappe, no one would trouble themselves about her. But a fine woman—every one is up in arms if any restriction be imposed on her; therefore again I say, my dear sir, you know nothing of the matter."

"Curse you, you young puppy! do you want to insinuate I am an antediluvian? Perhaps I may make you find the reverse, to your cost."

Fergus endeavoured to retreat, and at

length urged an introduction to his newly-discovered sister. Propriety demanding this, his father smoothed his ruffled brow, for the purpose of taking him to lady Castle Dermot's; and after a stare that, from any other than a supposed brother, would have highly offended Fidelia, protested his pleasure at having so charming a relative, declaring that his glass convinced him of their relationship. Of course, from the way in which matters had been arranged, not an idea of removing Fidelia from the protection of the countess was started; to the persuasion of her remaining under it, indeed, was owing the acknowledgment of Dundonald: no more than lord Castle Dermot, however, with Fidelia, did he see any immediate prospect of success with her ladyship; like him, however, he had a sufficient portion of vanity not to despair. But a mere hope of success was not sufficient for the vanity of lord Castle Dermot; he wanted to triumph where he had been so often triumphed over, and accordingly

wrote to colonel Grandison, informing him of the discovery that had taken place with regard to Fidelia, and that, if he could make up his mind to marrying for a year or two, he might have her immediately.

Grandison was scarcely more surprised than pained by this information—it destroyed a thousand delightful anticipations; so long had he dwelt, fondly dwelt, on the idea of Fidelia being the daughter of another person, that he knew not now how to relinquish it without extreme pain, more especially from knowing that Dundonald was by no means a person high in the estimation of the earl. But of what consequence was this to him, if, as averred by lord Castle Dermot, she was attached to his lordship? But could Grandison give credit to this assertion, recollecting, as he did, the soft complacency of her manner towards himself, the blushes that kindled on her cheek, the pleasure that sparkled in her eyes at his approach? No, he derided it, as the mere supposition of

egregious vanity, or the fabrication of intended malice.

But not to see how she bore the discovery was out of the question, and accordingly he set out again for the vicinity of Woodlands. Lord Castle Dermot was not a little elated when he heard of his arrival at the depôt, for as he knew he was not expected, he imputed his coming entirely to jealous apprehension, which it gratified him to think he had been able to excite.

Yielding to his restless, his anxious impatience, Grandison did not delay many hours proceeding to the countess's. Unapprised of his arrival, great was the agitation of Fidelia when, from a window at which she was sitting, she saw him coming towards the house. To meet him in the flutter his unexpected appearance had thrown her into was not endurable, and she accordingly decided, after a little hesitation, on going out, to avoid what was so unpleasant. She tried to persuade herself, that, if prepared for seeing him, she could not have been so affected by the circum-

stance; but when she thought on the coldness, the reserve she had decided on assuming towards him, or rather the ungrateful capriciousness they might occasion her to be accused of by him, she felt she could not meet him without agitation.

Oh! why was the painful task of dissembling imposed upon her? But was she not in doubt of the purity of his intentions? and could she act otherwise than she intended, without confirming the Beaumonts' belief of her being ungrateful and perfidious? But vainly did she wish he had not come to renew her painful struggles with herself—that, since she ought to shun him, he had not again been thrown in her way.

Mechanically almost she made her way to the ruin, as to the most distant and retired spot she could hide herself in. Seating herself within it, she strove to subdue her agitation: the dancing sunbeams fantastically chequering the pavement, the buzzing of the insects that sported in them, the low sound of murmuring wa-

ters, and the faint rustling of the trees in the warm air, that, as it played among them, wafted gales of sweetness from aromatic shrubs and flowers thickly planted round and through the building, were all calculated to occasion languor and repose.

She was leaning abstractedly against a pillar, when she was startled by a movement near her, and looking up, not without an apprehension of Grandison having followed, beheld an eye indeed fastened on her, but not the eye of Grandison; a stranger at a little distance stood evidently watching her. Confused by the circumstance, she rose to quit the place; in moving towards the door she passed him, and their eyes encountering, again was she struck with the earnestness of his gaze, while his lips moving, but without allowing her to hear any sound, seemed to intimate he wished to speak, but either wanted courage or power. She hesitated, almost was she tempted to pause to give him time, so persuasive, so prepossessing was his pale and dejected countenance,

slightly marked by the lines of middle age. She had not got very far, when she suddenly encountered him again, leaning, in an attitude of the deepest melancholy, against a gate through which she had to pass. On her approach, he stepped forward to open it for her; and as she passed with a slight bow, she heard him breathe a deep sigh. Could this be the person, she wondered, that she and Grandison had heard the other day? Almost was she tempted to believe it was, and her curiosity was strongly excited at the idea.

In the mean time, while she had thus fled to avoid him, Grandison was undergoing some mortification on her account. He had scarcely paid his compliments to the countess, when lord Castle Dermot joined them; and after a little chat, chiefly relative to the recent discovery, which lord Castle Dermot acknowledged to his mother having communicated—"Well," said the countess, "as Fidelia may, in consequence of it, be considered a kind of connexion of yours, I think she must be

summoned, that you may congratulate her on it."

A servant was accordingly sent to call her, who quickly returned to say she was out.

"Out!" repeated lady Castle Dermot, surprised, but pleased at the intimation; "why, that is strange, for," pointedly turning to the colonel, "she could not avoid seeing you coming to the house, from the window where she was sitting at work."

"Do you really think so, ma'am?" asked lord Castle Dermot, with a stolen glance of malicious exultation at Grandison.

Grandison, colouring and vexed, but striving to hide his vexation, observed, it was not a thing so wonderful as to be doubted; adding, he was happy to think his approach had not prevented Miss Hawthorn, as he understood he was still to call her, from taking an agreeable walk. Then finding, after a few efforts for the purpose, he could not immediately recover himself,

owing to the irritation occasioned by the manner of lord Castle Dermot, he abruptly took his leave.

Lady Castle Dermot felt that her welcome to him had not been as cordial as usual, and she was vexed at the idea, from the esteem and friendship she knew he merited; but her jealous fears respecting Fidelia would not permit her to yield to her real feelings for him. That Fidelia had gone out purposely to avoid him she could not imagine—consequently was insincere in the inference she sought to have drawn from the circumstance.

That he should have gratified lord Castle Dermot by appearing to draw such a one, incensed Grandison with himself; and having accidentally learned that lady Castle Dermot was going in the evening to a party at Mr. Otwell's, where he was extremely intimate, he resolved on also going there, in order to dissipate the idea of any thing of the kind dwelling on his mind, and also perhaps with a secret hope

that the manner of Fidelia herself would prove the insinuation of her ladyship in the morning incorrect.

Unapprised of his intention, lord Castle Dermot made a shuffling excuse for not accompanying the ladies in the evening, to the extreme surprise and displeasure of his mother. The fact was, lady Caroline Ayrcourt had followed him from Rock Fort, and being invited to pass the evening where she had taken up her abode, he could not bring himself to refuse, for fear of offending her.

Though general Ayrcourt, then abroad with his regiment, had been her voluntary choice—not so much, certainly, from any real attachment as her wish to be emancipated from parental control—and she had no longer extreme youth to plead in extenuation of her levity, nothing delighted her so much as admiration. She had a large family, but as some of the young ladies and gentlemen might have done away the idea of her being exactly what she wished to be thought, she contrived

to keep them all in the back ground, except one infant boy of two years old, whom she took with her wherever she went, his being with her giving her an opportunity of displaying a thousand fascinating graces, and encouraging as many insidious gallantries.

Lord Castle Dermot, who, on coming over with his regiment from England, was invited to Rock Fort by Grandison, was quickly caught by her manner; and his attentions were doubly gratifying, from the wound her vanity had received from not being able to entangle Grandison, who against her allurements was doubly armed by love and principle.

Alarmed by a rumour which, purposely to excite her jealousy, lord Castle Dermot contrived to have conveyed to her, of a match being in contemplation for him, she suddenly recollected a promise she had made to pay a visit at lady O'Leary's, in the neighbourhood of Woodlands; and promising to make but a short stay, this prevented her mother accompanying her,

whose rigid observation she could not bear. Her following him was a source of unspeakable gratification to lord Castle Dermot, his vanity fully equalling her own; and not a minute was lost in renewing his devotions to her.

CHAPTER II.

" Disguise, I see thou art a wickedness
Wherein the pregnant enemy does much."

THERE was a party for quadrilles at Mrs. Otwell's, but dancing had not commenced when colonel Grandison arrived. He quickly singled out Fidelia; he smilingly approached, and taking a seat beside her, whisperingly proceeded to offer his congratulations on the recent event. All her agitation renewed at his sight. Alike to conceal this agitation, and in conformity to her previous resolution of endeavouring as much as possible to prevent any renewal

of their former acquaintance, instead of meeting his looks with her usual one of pleasurable welcome, Fidelia merely coldly and stiffly bowed to these congratulations.

Grandison was astonished—in the course of a few short days such an alteration!—Was it owing to conceit, to vanity, or to a wish to give him indirectly to understand his attentions were no longer agreeable? To whatever cause, he felt so hurt by it as speedily to determine on following the example she had set him.

While each was thus trying to fortify their mind against the other, dancing commenced, without any one asking Fidelia, from the natural supposition of her being engaged to Grandison. At length Mrs. Otwell, who was one of those indefatigable hostesses that worry themselves by restless attention to their guests, approached, with an exclamation of wonder at seeing them both sitting.—"Why, dear me!" she said, "what's the reason of this, Miss Hawthorn? Don't you dance?—or you, colonel Grandison?"

Fidelia blushed, and looked down; but Grandison, roused from his abstracted attitude, with a forced smile replied in the negative, and immediately walked off to the other room.

"Well; dear me! to see the conceit and puppyism of young men now-a-days!" said good-natured Mrs. Otwell. "I dare say, if there had been no partner for him, the colonel would have been anxious enough to dance; and now to think that, through his means, you should be prevented—'tis too bad indeed! But you shan't be disappointed. There's poor Mr. Jenkins I forced to sit down to whist—he's sick of cards by this time, and no wonder, with such a partner; Mrs. Wrangle is enough to teaze any one's life out, with her eternal scolding and talking the game over. I'll make the colonel take his hand, and he shall dance with you."

"By no means, dear ma'am," cried Fidelia, catching her by the gown to prevent her leaving her. But Mrs. Otwell was not to be prevented; that Fidelia

could be reconciled to sitting she could not possibly imagine, and accordingly, in a few minutes, returned with the liberated Mr. Jenkins, whom, brought to her in this manner, she could not possibly refuse.

But little was she disposed to enjoy the amusement she was thus forced to join in; she was not only agitated, but dissatisfied with herself. She needed not have been so cold, so distant, she thought, with colonel Grandison; she might have contrived to prevent the renewal of his assiduities, without absolutely repelling him as an acquaintance. But she was not long compelled to maintain an unpleasant restraint over her feelings; lady Castle Dermot no sooner saw Grandison enter than she became uneasy, and quickly seizing an opportunity for throwing up her cards, repaired to the dancing-room, in order to watch what was going on. The spiritless manner of Fidelia quickly struck her, and she almost instantly made it a pretext for proposing their returning home.

But the dexterity with which she had

contrived to carry her off, out of the way of all she dreaded, could not reconcile her to the conduct of her son this evening, or efface the displeasure it gave her; accordingly, the ensuing morning, she gave him a long and severe lecture on it, which he bore with good-humoured patience, from having a point to carry. He wished to have some attention paid to lady Caroline, and feared, if he exasperated her still more, his request for the purpose might be refused; as it was, she at first resisted it, and when she did consent, it was chiefly for the purpose of sending Fidelia alone with him.

Keen and shrewd in her observations, she began to fear that, without a little address, what she had set her heart on might never be brought about; accordingly she decided on doing every thing that had a tendency to entangle the respective parties with each other, and induce a general belief of their being engaged. In pursuance of this plan, she now suddenly affected to change her mind about going herself to

lady Caroline, saying, she would depute Fidelia to wait upon her for her.

Fidelia begged to be excused, alike objecting to a *tête-à-tête* with his lordship, and being obtruded on the notice of the pert and conceited, while her claim to any particular attention was still unacknowledged. Through the strange, or, as she more justly conceived, selfish secrecy of her father concerning her, she knew she was still considered as a dependent on lady Castle Dermot, and the supercilious haughtiness with which it occasioned her, with but an exception or two, in consequence, to be treated, made her very unwilling to enter company. But in vain she declined the honour of being her ladyship's representative on this occasion—she was compelled to take a seat beside lord Castle Dermot in his curricle.

Happily for her, however, his lordship was too intent in displaying his skill in driving, too anxious to draw her attention to his enchanting greys, the envy and admiration of all his fashionable cotempora-

ries, to take any unpleasant advantage of the opportunity thus afforded him by his dextrous mamma for professing his passion.

The house of sir Phelim O'Leary, where, as already stated, lady Caroline had for the present taken up her abode, was at the other side of the town of ———, which, as also previously mentioned, owed its erection to the speculative genius of Mr. Dundonald.

Sir Phelim was a baronet of ancient date and once noble fortune, and also one of those characters that would not have found it quite so difficult as honest Dogberry did to get some one to write him down an ass; as a proof of which, was his permitting his lady to continue the thoughtless and extravagant career that had very much injured his patrimony. As an excuse for this, however, it must be allowed that she was not of a temper to be easily persuaded, and certainly not convinced, against her will. Without one lofty attainment, she was full of chatter,

whim, and caprice, a detester of the land she belonged to, and, like the swallows, an annual migrator, regularly passing her winters in Bath, where alone, she affectedly protested, it might be said she existed, vegetating being all that her living elsewhere could be called.

Her three eldest daughters, all of the family as yet allowed to be visible, were what the generality of fashionable girls, or fashionably-bred girls, now in general are —frivolous, shewy, and assuming. They had tolerable faces, and, as Shakespeare says, skill to make themselves others; and, what between nature and art, conceived themselves entitled to no small share of admiration.

Fidelia found the drawing-room she so reluctantly entered crowded, for the house was quite the morning lounge of the military heroes in the neighbourhood; here they always found lively conversation, with all the news and newspapers of the day, fashionable publications, folios of caricatures, and eternal trifling.

On this occasion the beaux predominated over the belles—lady Caroline, lady O'Leary, her daughters, and Mrs. Otway, the young coquettish wife of an officer in the depôt, being the only ladies present. Among the gentlemen were Fergus and colonel Grandison, the former flirting with Mrs. Otway, the latter playing with lady Caroline's little boy.

Lord Castle Dermot led forward his timid companion and presented her to the ladies, with his mother's request to lady Caroline to consider Miss Hawthorn's waiting on her ladyship as a visit from her. Lady Caroline looked a haughty refusal of this request, and scornfully turning away her head, whispered something to Miss O'Leary that excited a titter, to the equal confusion and resentment of Fidelia. The other ladies were not less haughtily disdainful; and, regretting that she had been forced to act so contrary to her wishes, Fidelia retreated to a chair, on her hand being relinquished by lord Castle Dermot for the purpose of taking

a seat between lady Caroline and Miss O'Leary on the sofa.

Unnoticed, except by being stared at, how cruelly situated did Fidelia find herself!—How barbarous of Fergus, to witness her distress, and yet not try to relieve her from it! How unkind, too, of colonel Grandison!—But had she not provoked his neglect by her own manner?

"So this is your mother's beauty!" said lady Caroline, sneeringly, to lord Castle Dermot. "What, I suppose she likes her because she resembles some of the beauties in the old picture-gallery? She looks quite as stiff, and as straight, and as sanctified! I dare say she acts the double part of toadeater and chaplain to her ladyship."

"Oh, curse it, this is too bad! She may read sermons, for aught I know; but as to flattery or sycophancy—no, no, I acquit her of that."

"Really! Then perhaps you seriously admire her?"

"Why, faith, she's devilish handsome!"

"Oh, in your eyes, I suppose!" turning pale with jealous spite at this assertion; "but, for my part, I can see nothing extraordinary in her."

"No, your looking-glass must prevent your seeing any thing extraordinary in any beauty you may behold. But I wish you would speak to her a little—she looks devilish uncomfortable."

"Lord, I shouldn't know what to say to such a Miss Primitive! The best thing that could be done would be for you to give her a hint to shorten her visit."

"Yes—but then I must shorten my own."

"No, I absolutely interdict that. If you return with her, I'll never forgive you, for I want you to drive me out. Let her walk—she's well accustomed to tramping, I dare say; and she doesn't fear meeting with any adventure, I suppose; or, if she does, perhaps, with all her sanctification, she won't dislike it."

Lord Castle Dermot hesitated: to run the risk of offending either lady was highly

disagreeable to him; reduced to this risk, however, he at length decided on running it with her who was least likely to be appeased; and accordingly, on his receiving a look from Fidelia indicative of her wish to be gone, informed her he had some business at the depôt which would detain him a long time, and that therefore it would be better she should get some one else to attend her back—Captain Dundonald perhaps would be kind enough to escort her.

"*Excusez moi*," said Fergus, affectedly. "I thank your lordship for the intended honour, but, to my infinite despair, must decline it, from also," looking significantly at the simpering Mrs. Otway, and sneeringly at lady Caroline, "having business at the depôt.—But don't be offended, *ma belle sœur*," he whispered—"Fidelia, you really are so *très charmante*, that, were you the sister of any other person, I should break through every thing to attend you. But to be seated in a carriage with a fine

woman that one cannot make love to—oh! 'tis indubitably the kind of thing one cannot endure."

"Curse me, if you are not, with the exception of one," glancing at colonel Grandison, "all puppies alike!" exclaimed major Lindsey, an old officer belonging to the depôt, starting up from a table at which he had been reading. "This is modern politeness! May I be shot, if either of my boys give indication of such frivolity, if I don't flagellate them worse than ever poor devil of a monk flagellated himself! Effeminate men and masculine women—why, there's not a metamorphose in Ovid half so monstrous.—But come, madam," turning to Fidelia, "I'll have the honour of seeing you home; and allow me to add, you should be pleased to have something of a rational being with you, instead of one of these exquisites."

"The exchange, I make no doubt, sir," said Fidelia, laughing, "will be for my advantage."

"Well said, by Jove!" exclaimed some of the officers. "Faith, Castle Dermot, you deserved that."

Grandison now quitted his chair.—"I thought, major," he said, "that you promised shortly to return, to take a walk with Mrs. Lindsey?"

The major eyed him for a moment in silence.—"I comprehend you," he then said.—"Well, Miss Hawthorn, I'll not intrude services that may be more agreeably rendered by another."

Lord Castle Dermot now interfered, infinitely discomposed by the idea of such an opportunity being afforded Grandison of conversing with Fidelia.—"Nay, I don't see the occasion of this," in a hurried tone he said. "Colonel Grandison, I wish you had allowed the major to do as he offered. Dundonald, 'tis very strange you won't attend your—that is—I mean Miss Hawthorn, back."

"If Miss Hawthorn is inclined to allow me the honour I solicit, I conceive no one

has a right to interfere," said Grandison, warmly. " My curricle is at the door, and she will render me happy by accepting a seat in it."

Half willing, half reluctant, Fidelia hesitated; at length perceiving every eye turned on her, she allowed Grandison to take her hand, and was immediately conducted to his curricle, followed by lord Castle Dermot, more than half repentant of his acquiescence in the wishes of lady Caroline, and undecided whether he should not yet disregard them. Grandison, however, did not give him time to retract; springing in the moment his fair companion was seated, he seized the reins, and was out of sight in a minute.

" Devilish provoking!" muttered his lordship, as he slowly returned to the drawing-room, where, instead of resuming his former seat, as expected by lady Caroline, he threw himself in a moody attitude on a chair.

" Oh! you are beginning to repent, are you?" cried the major. " Curse me, if I

an't glad of it! Colonel Grandison would serve you right if he drove her where he might for ever secure her. A man that wouldn't go anywhere, or everywhere, for such a girl, doesn't deserve her. I have not seen so fine a woman this age."

"The present company excepted," tittered one of the Miss O'Learys.

"No, faith, I make no exceptions. There is nature, there is animation. 'Tis a treat now to see a woman blush—'tis such a novelty, one might almost expect as much now to see the cheek of a canvas beauty change colour, as that of a woman of fashion!"

"He! he!" tittered little Mrs. Otway, who, from having a complexion that at present rendered rouge unnecessary, ventured to touch on delicate ground. "Well, if that's all, major, I am sure the colour of a woman of fashion changes."

"Yes—from red in the morning to pale at night."

"Psha!" cried lady Caroline, peevishly;

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" it would be well," spitefully glancing at Mrs. Otway, " if there was a way of concealing some people's blushes, they so often have occasion for them."

" Well, I pronounce," said the major, " that as long as a woman blushes, from the sensibility it evinces, she cannot be invulnerable to reproof or shame; and where there is a susceptibility to these, there must ever be a hope of reformation."

" Psha!" was again the peevish interjection of her ladyship, " how sententious! You really seem to me, major, as if you strung sentiments together as Sancho Panza did proverbs."

" Faith, no, ma'am—I hate sentiment, or, perhaps more correctly speaking, pretenders to sentiment, quite as much as sir Peter Teazle himself did. But here am I chattering away, preaching to the winds and moralizing to the waves, while my little woman is waiting at home for me; adieu, therefore, for the present, dear ladies and sweet gents! and, with my adieu, accept my apology for having, like too many

in the world, found pleasure at hearing myself talk, quite forgetting that others had an equal delight in hearing themselves." So saying, he, laughing, withdrew, with a happy carelessness about what was thought of him.

CHAPTER III.

"For love, thou know'st, is full of jealousy."

FIDELIA had been greatly discomposed by her recent visit, and the circumstance it led to did not by any means tend to lessen that discomposure. When, however, after proceeding some way, she found no attempt on the part of her companion at particularity, no allusion to any thing that could embarrass or distress her, she gradually became a little calmer. But at length the reins were slackened, and turning his eyes upon her—"I hope Miss

Hawthorn will not think I take any undue advantage of the present circumstance," he said, " if I make use of it, to ask a question I am most anxious to have answered?"

" I should hope," returned Fidelia, " that colonel Grandison would be incapable of taking undue advantage of any circumstance. But," and her voice trembled, " I know no question I have the power of answering that can remove any anxiety he labours under."

" What!" and he looked reproachfully at her, " after the rumour you must, I think, be aware I have heard—the rumour of an attachment—of—of an intended marriage between you and lord Castle Dermot?—Pardon me if I have been too abrupt; but solicitude on some subjects is so painful, that one may be forgiven if they take what they conceive the readiest way of ridding themselves of it."

Fidelia faltered. What was she to infer from this but the intended avowal of a passion she had the strongest motives for

determining to reject? To allow him to believe in the report concerning her and lord Castle Dermot she could not bear; yet, to deny it—and what would it be, but probably to occasion a declaration she now shrunk from receiving?—" Pardon me," she at length said, " if I do not answer you: but where an attempt at deception has been detected, one may be excused, I think, for not being explicit."

" An attempt at deception!" he repeated, with surprise; " I do not comprehend you, ma'am."

" Oh, colonel Grandison, how can you say so?"

" How!" he exclaimed—" Pardon me for repeating your expressions, but really they are, or rather what they allude to, incomprehensible. I must therefore entreat you to be a little more explicit."

Fidelia, however, as if deeming that unnecessary, turned away her head disdainfully.

Evidently offended, Grandison instantly stopped the horses, and protested he would

not proceed another step till she had explained.

"Well, if I must then," said Fidelia; and she proceeded to mention the circumstance of his allowing himself to be known to her and her friends by different names, and the consequent suspicion it inspired to his prejudice.

"And is this all?" said Grandison, again touching the horses to make them go on. "What a slight matter may injure a man! To accident was owing what you impute to design: on neither party did I lay any injunction of silence concerning me; and if, as colonel Morven, I found I was not known to you, as colonel Grandison I conceived there could be no possible harm in trying to learn why you had not accompanied your friends to Rock Fort, where, by the name you accuse me of purposely concealing, I should have been introduced to you. Foibles, failings, frailties, I confess to, but not a disposition to perfidy or dissimulation. Passion may perhaps too often sway, and prejudice go-

vern; but of treachery, of ever seeking to deceive, my heart acquits me."

Abashed, confused by his manner, this reproachful but calm vindication of himself, Fidelia knew not how to look up, how to meet the probably indignant glance of the kind and generous spirit she had offended.

Her embarrassment was too great not to be noticed.—"Come," he said, with a smile, "I see you are sorry for having falsely suspected me, at least so I choose to fancy; and, as a proof I am not mistaken, give me your hand."

Fidelia could not refuse—it trembled in his; and again was he checking the horses, when the countess appeared in sight. Anxious to know the success of her stratagem, she had walked out to meet her son and Fidelia. On seeing the latter in a different carriage and unaccompanied by him, the wildest terror took possession of her, and, in a voice scarce audible, she demanded, was he killed?

Having alighted, Fidelia and Grandison hastened to dispel her alarm. Having explained the circumstance to which it was owing, anger and indignation quickly succeeded to it in her mind. What! through the folly, the perverseness of this thoughtless boy, as she chose to call him, was she to be disappointed in the hope she had set her heart on? Was it not enough that, by refusing to drive Fidelia back, as common politeness required, he had run the risk of irreparably offending her, but that he must expose her to the insidious attentions of his rival?

She tried to ascertain, by the looks of each, what had occurred in the drive; but, unable to satisfy herself, hastened back to the house, in order to find it out from Fidelia. Pretending to Grandison she was still so affected by the fright she had met with as to wish to lie down, he, of course, did not come in; and the moment he was gone, she proceeded to question Fidelia on the conversation that had taken place between them, saying, with a forced

smile, she concluded she had been listening to a great many fine speeches.

"By no means," Fidelia calmly replied.

Lady Castle Dermot tried to be satisfied with this reply—tried to believe there was nothing to confess, but in vain; fully verifying the remark, that where there is anxious hope, there is always extreme fear. At length, grasping the hand of Fidelia—"You wonder perhaps at my questions," she said; "but I cannot but be anxious to know that there is no danger of my being disappointed in the wishes of my heart. Oh, should I be so, how bitter will be my portion of misery! In pity, in compassion, therefore, steel your heart against all that might lead you to forget my strong solicitude to call you daughter—a circumstance that I think and hope as likely to conduce to your permanent happiness as mine: each isolated in a degree, we would make up to each other for the want of other connexions; in you I should find the affectionate daughter denied me by Provi-

dence—in me you would have the tender mother not spared to you. Oh! from the moment I knew I might choose for my son—from that moment I have lost something of that terrible feeling of forlornness that has so long oppressed me. I know it may be said, that from this I might have rescued myself by forming other ties; but my affections are too indissolubly attached to those that I have lost to permit such a thought; besides that early habits and prejudices have given a reserve, a shyness to my temper, that renders a general intercourse with strangers highly unpleasing. I may yet perhaps enter into the particulars of what I now only hint at; you will not then, I dare say, be surprised at what you may now deem romantic and eccentric, when I paint to you the husband I have lost, the youthful sister mouldering in an early grave. See," she continued, suddenly rising and drawing up a long green curtain of silk which Fidelia had before noticed in the room, and disclosing, as she did, the portrait of

a female of extreme beauty, " if the affliction of losing such a relative as that was not enough to give a turn to the disposition!"

Fidelia gazed for a minute without replying, affected not merely by the emotion of the countess, but the manner in which the object of her admiration had been presented to her view.

" Beloved Julia!" cried the countess, " how soon was the radiant beauty of that countenance veiled by sorrow! Instead of the glittering coronet, how soon did the grass of the grave wave over that brow!" She wept, she clasped her hands in sorrow, and letting fall the curtain as suddenly as she had raised it, threw herself upon a couch, nearly exhausted by her feelings.

Alarmed, distressed, Fidelia hung over her: at length she began to recover, and again grasping the hands of Fidelia as she dried her tears, thanked her for her kind solicitude about her.—" Oh, as you hung over me," she cried, " how strongly did

you bring that sister I lament to my view! Your likeness to her is astonishing, and, I will now acknowledge, even more than your desolate situation, first excited for you an interest in my heart. But tell me, may I indulge the hope on which I dwell for happiness?"

Fidelia shrunk back.—"Oh, madam, on that subject I entreat your forbearance! Be assured, there is nothing wanting to strengthen your claims on me?"

"Ah, this is vague, this is idle!" said the countess, resentfully: "I know but as the wife of Castle Dermot there is no other way of always being sure of your attentions. 'Tis not natural to suppose your father would permit you to remain single, even if inclined yourself to do so, and, once married elsewhere, I may bid adieu to you."

But there was no prospect of that at present, Fidelia observed.

"Oh, there was but too great a one!" lady Castle Dermot said; and was about speaking of Grandison, when she checked

herself, lest, if confirmed in her belief of his being serious, Fidelia should be still more disinclined to attend to the suit she wished, and again renewed her entreaties to obtain the promise she required.

Fidelia, though resolute in resisting it, felt her spirits exhausted by this persecution, and accordingly, on a visitor being unexpectedly announced, to the great discomposure of her ladyship, availed herself of the circumstance to retreat precipitately to her chamber.

But of what avail was a transient respite from the persecution she was undergoing? It was cruel, she thought, of the countess to persist in urging a suit that even pride must have militated against her favouring, since certainly lord Castle Dermot had never wooed her in a manner calculated to win her to be his, and had, by his recent conduct, evinced, she conceived, a very careless indifference about her. But she dreaded declaring this, lest it should be imputed to resentful anger, and attentions in consequence be occasioned that

might compel her to offend the countess, by rendering her unable to assign any longer a plausible pretext for rejecting him. To avow her dislike to his manners and indirectly-avowed principles would, she knew, be ridiculed, and to acknowledge her preference for another, decided as she was against that other, would be absurd and humiliating. But perhaps her father would assist her in this dilemma, and to him she accordingly decided on immediately going, anxious to be relieved from the apprehension of offending a person to whom her heart owed such obligations, and whose very persecution, when the petulance it excited had a little subsided, she considered an additional cause for gratitude and affection, since what but the highest regard and esteem for her could possibly have induced the countess to be so solicitous for her union with her son?

On reaching her father's, to which she repaired by a private way, she was shewn into the library, where he speedily joined her. Kissing her cheek, he asked, with

something of surprise, what had procured him this visit?—"Come, confess," he said; "for, faith, I am so pleased with you," patting her cheek, "I can deny you nothing—an additional plume or fancy ornament?"

"No," Fidelia replied; his kindness (for he had thought proper to make her some presents) prevented any thing of that kind. It was something infinitely more serious, more important, she came to solicit.

"Indeed! Then pray be explicit," he exclaimed impatiently.

Fidelia, though not without a little embarrassment, obeyed. Having revealed the dread she was in relative to the countess, she begged his interference, should it be necessary; adding, she felt she had not courage to be so explicit with lady Castle Dermot as might be necessary.

"Not the courage!" repeated Dundonald, after staring at her for a minute: "but you have the courage to tell me of the folly you have decided on? Hearken to me," he added, in a tone of fury, "and

don't imagine me trifling, when I tell you that, should you venture to hesitate about accepting lord Castle Dermot, should he indeed honour you by an offer of his hand, that minute will be the last of your favour with me. Gad-a-mercy! I can't help thinking of a girl like you, lifted but a few days ago out of the very mire of obscurity, now talking of rejecting an earl! But the fact is, I suppose your brain is turned by your sudden elevation, and, instead of a peer, you fancy you may have a sovereign prince at your feet?"

"No, sir," replied Fidelia, a little indignantly, "I trust there is no extravagance in my ideas. But to be more candid than, out of regard to lady Castle Dermot, I at first wished to be, the principles of her son are not those I can approve of."

"His principles!" repeated Dundonald, with a deriding laugh—"No, no, that won't do—a girl of eighteen think or talk of principles! The fact is, you have got some other lover in your head—that blush avows it; but, by the Lord! if you don't

dislodge him—if you don't do exactly as I wish, you shall march—trot off again to your bogs!—I'll have no sighing and whining here: 'twas not to be tormented I acknowledged you."

At harshness so unexpected Fidelia burst into tears.—"Is there no way, sir," she said, "to retain your esteem but by rendering myself miserable?"

He was turning fiercely to reply, when the door opened, and the countess entered, followed by her son. Restless and dissatisfied with himself for having allowed Fidelia to be driven back by Grandison, he quickly followed, spite of the arts of lady Caroline to detain him, and met with such a reception from his mother for his recent conduct as made him almost blush for it. But this was not all: she no sooner saw that he appeared to regret it, than she so artfully worked upon his feelings of pride and vanity, inducing him to believe that Fidelia really favoured him, but would probably transfer her regard to her more assiduous suitor, if he lost any time

in following up his advantages with her, that, rather than allow Grandison to triumph over him, he consented to make the desired proposal to her.

The countess hastened to seek her, for the purpose of bringing him to her; and on inquiring about her, on not finding her within, heard from one of the servants who had accidentally seen her entering, that she was gone to Mr. Dundonald's.

The visit had too much the appearance of a stolen one not to alarm her ladyship; it instantly occurred to her that she was gone to complain to him of the affront she had received from lord Castle Dermot, and insist on his interfering, to prevent her being any further teazed about him.

Communicating her suspicions to his lordship, she proposed their directly following, to prevent the mischief this complaint might occasion; and having fully decided on proposing for Fidelia, he made no objection. He certainly knew there would not be quite so much celebrity in obtaining a wife of his own, as in carrying

off the wife of another person; but then Fidelia was so handsome—he knew not but that he might be as great an object of envy from one circumstance as another—a consideration that had no small weight with him.

CHAPTER IV.

"Hope is a lover's staff—walk hence with that,
And manage it against despairing thoughts."

THE manner in which Dundonald received them quickly dispelled the countess's apprehension of his participating in the resentment she imputed to Fidelia; but again was she a little alarmed by the deadly paleness that overspread the cheek of the latter at their entrance. She was not of a temper to allow herself long to remain in suspense; scarcely was she seated, ere she opened the purpose for which she was come, concluding by entreating Dundonald to use his influence with his

daughter to induce her to acquiesce in her wishes and lord Castle Dermot's.

"I should hope," said his lordship, attempting to take her hand, "that her own heart will plead for me."

"Should it not," said Dundonald—"should she remain insensible to the high honour your lordship has done her, by me she shall no longer be considered as a daughter."

In what a predicament did she find herself! Surrounded, environed where her remonstrances, her entreaties would be disregarded, she attempted to escape from the room, but was prevented; lady Castle Dermot hung about her, lord Castle Dermot supplicated, her father threatened, threatened with even looks of savage ferocity, fearful of irreparable injury to his own views if she offended the countess by persisting in her rejection of her son, and anticipating from the reverse the most pleasing consequences. At length Fidelia besought at least a little further time for consideration; but her entreaty was disre-

garded; and at last, absolutely overpowered by the urgency with which she was assailed, a scarcely-uttered compliance was wrung from her. But scarcely had the caresses it occasioned convinced her of the promise she had given, ere her sickening heart shrunk with recoiling dismay, and tears gushed from her eyes. Yet why repent? why regret she had not been more resolute? To have braved the displeasure of her father, to have risked the friendship of the countess—would it have been to allow her to realize her secret wishes, or confer happiness on another? No—compelled, as she was, by the most powerful motives to resist all the ardour, the tenderness of that other, was not lord Castle Dermot all that the generality of the world admire? and would not her union with him secure to her at least one unalterable friend? But these arguments failed of immediate effect; and alarmed at seeing her so affected, lest, in pique at the circumstance, her volatile and conceited son should retreat from his engagement, lady

Castle Dermot proposed her returning immediately with her, leaving lord Castle Dermot to follow in the evening with her father. Fidelia gladly consented; but his lordship objected a little to the proposal, till informed Grandison was expected to dinner by Dundonald, when his anxiety to witness the first effect of the communication he had to receive upon him induced him to stay.

By the time they reached home Fidelia had sufficiently recovered herself to be able to listen with languid smiles to the arguments made use of by the countess for the purpose of restoring her to composure; it was a great relief, however, to her exhausted spirits, to find, on her arrival there, that two old ladies, distant neighbours of the countess, had come to dine *en famille* with her.

She was sitting by one of the drawing-room windows after dinner, when the party from her father's appeared in sight; involuntarily she started on her feet on seeing Grandison approaching the house,

and fled to her chamber; but, fearful of being followed there by the too-officious countess, or else summoned in a manner she could not refuse, she hurried from it into a garden it opened to, the house being an old-fashioned rambling one of one story.—But why fly what was inevitable? But some time hence, the pain, the embarrassment of seeing Grandison, after her engagement to lord Castle Dermot was known, would not perhaps be so great as now. He might not perhaps intend to prolong his present visit, and, in the course of their drive in the morning, he had intimated his intention of not remaining long at the depôt. Could she avoid him now, ere they met again she might be completely mistress of herself; but, at present, she could not bear the idea of encountering the perhaps-reproachful glance of his keen eyes; for in vain she tried to assure herself she had succeeded in concealing any emotion that might have given encouragement to his hopes.

The garden sloped down to a thick shrubbery, divided from the diversified grounds beyond by a slight fence; hither she bent her trembling steps, to be out of the way of being seen by any one that might come in quest of her, till her agitation had a little subsided, or she might hope Grandison had departed, the depôt being at a sufficient distance from Woodlands to furnish him with an excuse for doing so early.

As, with an eye of apprehension, she kept looking towards her chamber to see whether any one was coming from it, she was startled by a rustling immediately behind her, and glancing round in almost fearful expectation of seeing Grandison, beheld the stranger whom, a few days before, she had encountered in the ruins. He shrunk back on being perceived by her; but whether he directly quitted the garden, she could not tell.

There was nothing in his appearance to alarm, but still his loitering and lurking about the place seemed suspicious, and she

accordingly quickly emerged from the deep gloom of the shrubbery, but still did not attempt to re-enter the house, till getting dark, she was slowly approaching it, when she encountered the countess coming out in quest of her. No comments were made on her abrupt retreat from the drawing-room, and her unwillingness to return to it was quickly removed by being informed that the whole of the visitors were gone, but that lord Castle Dermot, owing to an engagement that could not be broke, had returned with colonel Grandison to the depôt.

The fact was, his lordship wished to be himself the person to communicate to lady Caroline the engagement he certainly had been betrayed into forming, conceiving then that he could better deprecate the resentment it was so calculated to excite. But the triumph he had anticipated from communicating it to Grandison was not exactly what he hoped: though the chilling pang experienced by Grandison at its

disclosure made him feel it was a circumstance little expected, still he had a sufficient command over himself to prevent the vanity of his lordship being gratified at his expence; indeed, at first he was almost incredulous of what he heard, and in consequence, with seeming carelessness, assented to accompanying the party to Woodlands ere he returned to the depôt, that he might be satisfied, without further suspense, of the credit to be given to it, and thus, as Othello says—"Away at once with love or jealousy!" But in vain: on entering the room, he looked eagerly for Fidelia, persuaded that a glance would be sufficient to let him know what he was to think. Of this, however, he was not suffered to remain another minute in suspense; lady Castle Dermot approaching him, asked him, in a low voice, to congratulate her on what had occurred.

Still maintaining a mastery over himself, he obeyed, but no sooner was convinced that lord Castle Dermot had not been amusing himself by what he had as-

serted, than he began to meditate making his visit a short one, lest, should he see Fidelia so immediately after learning her engagement, he should not be able to command himself so entirely as he wished. He was not long in devising an excuse for taking an early leave, and, to his surprise, on rising to depart, was informed by Castle Dermot he would go with him to the depôt.

He felt as if there was a sense of injury rankling in his heart: the smiles, the blushes, the general manner of Fidelia, had certainly inspired hopes: but was she to blame for their not being realized? was he not himself, for not having taken advantage of those demonstrations in his favour?—But no—he felt indignant with himself for regretting the circumstance. If she really experienced a preferable feeling for him, how could she so easily be won to favour the addresses of another? or if she did, what must she in reality be, with this regard lurking in her heart, to allow the first that seriously indicated his

attachment to obtain her hand? In either case, she was unworthy of another thought. Of course, it may be supposed he was kept in complete ignorance of the reluctance she had evinced to becoming lord Castle Dermot's; his lordship, from vanity, and his mother, from policy, gave him no hint on the subject—on the contrary, both, from these motives, said every thing calculated to induce a belief of her compliance with their wishes being voluntary.

To lord Castle Dermot then, after all, he at last began to suppose she had always been in reality attached—that her going out to avoid him, on his calling after his return to the depôt, and her altered manner at Mrs. Otwell's, which had so offended him, were both owing to a wish to repel his further attentions; and how he had thought of still persevering in them he now wondered. But had he now seen her, ere regret or agitation were subdued, he would almost have been convinced that he had not deceived himself in any one fond or flattering idea he had entertained

with regard to her. But this the policy of lady Castle Dermot prevented; aware of the danger of their meeting while yet their mutual feelings continued in full force, she rejoiced at Fidelia's being absent from the drawing-room on his entrance, and resolved, if possible, on not sending for her till his departure.

Relieved by finding him gone, Fidelia again forced herself to listen to the countess with complacency; she was anxious indeed to hearken to whatever had a tendency to reconcile her to the engagement that, though betrayed into, she considered inevitable; yet still rejoiced was she when the hour of retiring released her from the necessity of further attending to those representations.

She was turning from wishing the countess good-night, who parted from her at the entrance to her chamber, when she was startled by fancying she caught a glimpse of some one escaping into the garden, the door opening to which was always, by her own desire, left for her to

close herself, while the weather continued sultry. For a moment she stood irresolute whether to advance or retreat; then, persuaded she must be mistaken, she proceeded to the door, though not without a little tremor, and securing it, sat down to read, unable to rest immediately, and equally unable to remain without trying to divert her thoughts. She had not been long engaged in this manner, when, the recent incident still dwelling on them, the idea of the stranger she had encountered that evening in the shrubbery occurred to her. But could it be that he could have thought of gaining access to her apartment? His appearance made her think it very improbable: yet, when she reflected on his lurking manner, she knew not how to dismiss it; and, with something like a creeping sensation of fear stealing over her, would perhaps have quitted the room to go in quest of some of the other inmates of the house, but that, from the profound stillness that by this time prevailed through it, she was led to imagine every one retired

to repose, and consequently, without being sure there was cause for alarm, did not like to disturb them.

At length, after watching and listening for a considerable time, she yielded to the exhaustion of her feelings, and retired to repose. But short and disturbed were her slumbers; and rising early, she threw a dressing-gown over her, and repaired to the garden, to try the effect of the fresh breeze of morning on her languid frame. At length the striking of the clock reminding her it was time to prepare for breakfast, she re-entered her chamber for the purpose, and was dressing herself, when, chancing to raise her eyes above the glass, she read, pencilled in large letters on the wainscot above it—"You are not the daughter of Dundonald." What she felt at the instant—her surprise, her astonishment at the intimation, or rather, perhaps, the manner in which it was given —may easier be conceived than described: she knew not what to think, but quickly

decided on hastening to the countess to acquaint her with the strange circumstance, that, if deemed worthy of attention, no time might be lost in making the inquiries it must suggest.

While finishing her dress, the idea of the stranger again occurred to her thoughts, and almost she fancied she was not mistaken the preceding night—that in reality he had been in her chamber, and that to him this intimation might be imputed. But if indeed he knew the assertion just, if indeed he could prove she was not the person supposed, why not openly come forward for the purpose, instead of intimating it in a manner calculated to perplex and bewilder?—But her ruminations on the subject were interrupted; ere she was ready to leave her chamber, the countess's woman came to tell her that her lady was impatiently waiting for her in the breakfast-room.

Fidelia would have been a little surprised at the intimation, knowing her ladyship was seldom there so early, but

that she concluded it was her anxiety to commence preparations for the approaching event that had occasioned her to rise sooner than usual. Approaching event!—She wondered she could consider it so, uncertain as she was, from the communication she had now to make, whether it would ever take place. But, instead of the joy, the delight she expected to see sparkling in the eyes of the countess, from the hopes she at least was still indulging, and the affectionate greetings she had hitherto been accustomed to, she was not merely astonished, but alarmed, to see her countenance even gloomily thoughtful, and to be received with an air of cold constraint. The communication that had been bursting from her lips was checked, and, pale and dismayed from a presentiment of impending ill, she stood silently gazing at her. After suffering her to remain in this way for a minute, the countess at length motioned to her to take a chair; but, instead of obeying, Fidelia now ventured to

ask, but in a voice timid from apprehension, whether any thing was the matter?

Repeating the expression in a tone of severity, lady Castle Dermot demanded whether she could not surmise that there could?

Though still more dismayed by her manner, Fidelia faintly replied in the negative.

"What! nothing?" with still greater sternness—"nothing in which you yourself might be concerned?"

Fidelia started at the strange coincidence between this question and the circumstance she had to reveal.—"Oh, speak out, madam!" she cried, with the energy which alarm sometimes gives—"spare me the torture of vain surmises!"

"Well, to be explicit then—but sit down, for you look very pale—another person claims being the daughter of Mr. Dundonald; and in advancing this claim, you have been accused of premeditated treachery."

Fidelia clasped her hands.—"Good God! to what new trials am I to be exposed?" she cried. "Unaided, unsupported, how vainly perhaps may I attempt my vindication!"

"You will neither be unaided nor unsupported," said the countess, reproachfully: "after the strong interest I have evinced for you, the affection that induced me to wish to see you the wife of my son, the apprehension must, I think, even to yourself, appear ill founded. But have you no recollection of any circumstance that can substantiate your right to the title 'tis now attempted to dispossess you of?"

Fidelia shook her head—No, nothing had ever been revealed to her concerning herself; or if she did know any (alluding to her relationship to Mr. Dundonald), it was only what had a tendency to disprove it. To the startled countess she then revealed the circumstance that was hurrying her to her at the moment she received her summons.

Lady Castle Dermot scarcely heard her to a close, ere she rose for the purpose of viewing this strange intimation. But what was the astonishment of Fidelia, when, on approaching the toilet to point it out to her, not a trace of the letters was found remaining?—Good God! to what was this owing?—to a wish of preventing any possibility of the person who had pencilled them being discovered through them?—or for the purpose of injuring her, by making her appear the fabricator of an improbable fiction?

Darting a look of indignation at her, the countess threw herself on a chair, where she remained for some time silent; then turning to Fidelia, she sternly demanded how she dared attempt imposing on her credulity by such a wild incoherent assertion as she had made? but too evidently intimating her belief, by this imperious demand, of more than a suspicion of the integrity of Fidelia being entertained—of her so lately loved and valued—whom, but the preceding day, she

pressed with maternal transport to her heart, as the future participator of all the honours of the family. Incapable of establishing her right to the title of Dundonald's daughter, she fancied Fidelia had artfully fabricated the recent story, as a pretext for her ready resignation of it: yet, how strange, how improbable, such art in one so young! She knew not what to think, what to believe; and while she wavered, Fidelia, trying to recollect herself, proceeded to mention the stranger she had recently encountered lurking in the grounds, and her strong persuasion of his being the person concerned in this strange transaction—but whether as friend or foe she could not possibly surmise, from her utter ignorance of him.

The agitated countess had an immediate inquiry set on foot about him; but not one of her domestics, or the people more immediately about the grounds, could recollect having ever seen a person in them; and the confidence that was beginning to revive in Fidelia was again

shaken by this circumstance. But not readily could it be entirely withdrawn—not readily could she think of abandoning a creature whom she had so loved, on whom she had so recently suffered herself to depend for happiness: exclusive of this, both humanity and justice required that her opinion should be suspended, while there was an excuse for its being so. But after, should Fidelia prove to be what she was now so peremptorily accused of, after all her seeming worth and gentleness, what delightful visions of happiness would the circumstance destroy! Tears dropt from her at the thought—but not the pure, the unmingled tears of humanity, but the gushing ones of selfish feeling, at the idea, that, should this be the case, she should again have to experience the chilly sensation of forlornness she had so recently been sinking under.

But, to try and rid herself of this terrible apprehension, she now speedily roused herself; the investigation of the affair could alone do this, and she accordingly decided

on hastening to Mr. Dundonald's. In vain, ere she left her, Fidelia tried to learn who her accusers were—she had been enjoined, for the present, to silence on the subject; she did not hesitate, however, to hearken to her entreaties for being permitted to remain in her chamber till matters were decided, the idea of encountering any eye, while suspicion hung about her, being insupportable to her feelings; neither did her ladyship depart without yielding to something of returning tenderness for her, assuring her that, let the affair end as it might, provided she were proved guiltless of deceit, she might rely on her continued protection.

Fidelia dropt a tear of gratitude at the assurance, but felt too much dismayed, too much alarmed, to be capable of deriving any consolation from it. Should her present title be disproved, in vain perhaps would even those who wished to find her innocent strive to believe her so.—"Farewell, a long farewell, in all probability, to my so-recently-promised greatness!" burst

involuntarily from her pale lips; for, beyond the possibility of doubting it, she felt that a reverse in her situation was at hand. Again her streaming eyes seemed appealingly to inquire for what new trials she was reserved—whether the slight bark that, from its first launch on the ocean of life, had been tempest-tossed, would ever be allowed to gain a haven of security? But not pride or ambition drew from her the bitter tears she now shed: her heart had been ungladdened by the rank she had been made to look forward to, and the title she had been allowed to claim had been but a source of little happiness to her; neither from Dundonald or his son had she met with the kindness or attention of near connexions: it was the thought of being condemned, of losing the esteem and regard of those she loved and valued, that agonized her feelings and tortured her soul.

Sunk in the deepest dejection, she leant her fair face against a window, pondering what she should do—what would become

of her, should she be cast off by the countess, thrown off entirely, as she was convinced she was, by the Beaumonts, from never having received an answer to the explanatory letter she concluded received by them from her.

As she viewed the delightful scenery amidst which, but the day before, she had had every reason to believe days and years would have rolled away in the enjoyment of all that fond affection, and rank, and affluence can bestow, tears again burst from her at the contrasting prospects of forlornness she now beheld in imagination.

Hours passed away without her seeing any one except the servant who brought in the breakfast she was unable to touch, and evening was approaching, when the same attendant came in with a letter for her, which with a hand trembling with emotion Fidelia received, and read as follows:—

"Upon a further consultation with your father, as, for the present, I

must continue to call him, I find he agrees with me, that, till the affair in question is finally investigated, it would be better for you to remove from Woodlands, as, till then, if you remained there, you must suffer a constraint that could not be but irksome. Every thing is accordingly settled for your immediate departure, and Brown, who hands you this, will attend you to the place you are to set out from.

"L. CASTLE DERMOT."

Fidelia could not be displeased at this arrangement, releasing her, as it did, from all apprehension of being obtruded on while she wished to remain unseen. It would have been infinitely more satisfactory to her, however, had the countess been a little more explicit in her note—but perhaps she had not the power; and trusting, or rather trying, to hope that from suspense at least she should soon be relieved, she quickly prepared herself to depart; and was conducted, when ready,

by Mrs. Brown to a retired part of the park, where a chaise was waiting for her, with an elderly woman of plain appearance in it—the person, she was given to understand, appointed by the countess to see her safe to her destination. But where was this destination? To her surprise, on inquiring, she learned they were to proceed to Dublin. She had no idea of being sent to such a distance. Had she been consulted, however, she knew she had no choice; she therefore expressed no discontent at the circumstance.

By travelling without intermission they reached Dublin, where she was set down at a mean-looking house in one of the obscure streets leading to the North-strand, kept, Mrs. Nevin, her fellow-traveller, informed her, by a sister of hers, who strove to support herself by the sale of a few articles in the haberdashery line, a specimen of which was exhibited in a few scraps of dirty tape and rusty pins, accommodatingly torn into rows and half rows, dang-

ling at the parlour-window, where the hand of a glazier seemed very much required.

Fidelia could not but feel much surprised at being brought to such a place, since, while her present claim at least was dubious, she conceived very different accommodation would have been provided for her. For an instant the glow of resentful feelings mantled her cheek—but it was but for an instant; the idea that, mean and miserable as it was, the period might now be at hand in which she would be grateful for such a shelter for her unprotected head, quickly subdued her to tears, and in deep dejection she followed into the house. The interior was as wretched as the exterior, and, overpowered by grief, fatigue, and disgust, she quickly sought to obtain in repose a little respite from her feelings; her mind, however, was too perturbed to admit of this, and shortly rising from the bed on which she had thrown herself, she would have asked Mrs. Nevin to have accompanied her out to see

a little of the city, but that the day was wet, and she was accordingly obliged to have recourse to some books she had brought with her to divert her thoughts.

The next morning, after breakfast, she was preparing to address a letter to the countess, conceiving it might be expected, and anxious besides to have an excuse for representing the wretchedness she was suffering, when the door was thrown open with a suddenness that startled her; and turning to see who the intruder was, she beheld lord Castle Dermot. Surprise rendered her motionless for an instant; but his attempting to clasp her in his arms restored her to herself, and uncertain what to think, she tremblingly inquired why she saw him there?

"Can you ask?" he angrily demanded; "can you think so lightly of my professions, as to imagine I could hesitate a moment in following, to assure you of my unchangeable regard?"

"Oh, my lord, I should have been much better pleased had you refrained from such

a step; I should be treacherous to the countess indeed, if, for the present at least, I could permit any further attentions from you."

"Pho! pho! stuff! nonsense! As well might you desire or expect the operations of nature to be suspended, as that I would for an instant cease to think of you.—Curse me! when I heard you were gone, if I could rest till I set out after you, lest you should wrong me by supposing I was one of those whom circumstances could influence. 'A rose by any other name would smell as sweet;' and devil take me if I care about your not being proved the daughter of Dundonald!"

"Have I really been proved not his daughter?" asked Fidelia, turning of a deadly paleness.

"Oh, clearly: but don't mind it—nothing can disprove your being the loveliest girl in creation; and let that," attempting to take her hand, "suffice for you."

"And the countess?" demanded Fidelia, mechanically resisting this attempt—"what

does she now say? what does she now think of me? Am I not to be informed of all that has occurred?—how it is I have been proved a usurper of the rights of another?"

"Oh yes, I suppose so. But, hang me if I can answer your questions explicitly, I am myself so confused and agitated by all that has lately occurred. There is but one thing I can positively assure you of—that is, that, in spite of all opposition, I am still determined on making you the participator of every good I enjoy."

"No, no," returned Fidelia, "there's nothing can induce me to profit by this generous intention. After the kindness I experienced from your mother, I should consider myself the most ungrateful of human beings if I could be the means of having her expectations concerning you disappointed. Not merely disowned, but traduced, 'tis not possible she could now sanction your sentiments for me; and without that, believe me, they will never be encouraged by me."

"Hang it! this is being too scrupulous. But," colouring violently, and after a momentary hesitation, "the fact is, my dear girl, my mother, as you say, would never now consent to an union, being a vast stickler for equal alliances; and, curse it! my father has tied me up so, that without her consent I can do nothing; so, to render ourselves happy, we must e'en wave a little ceremony, and be happier, to a certainty, in the way proposed by me, than in the way that was proposed for us."

"I don't comprehend you," said Fidelia, drawing back.

"Nay, deuce take me! this is being affected. Well, to be explicit, you must consent to letting love be the only tie between us."

With all his effrontery, Fidelia had not believed his lordship capable of any thing so deliberately vile and insulting; but, disdaining to give utterance to the feelings it excited—to hold parley with a person so base, she was quitting the room, when he prevented her; the Rubicon was

passed, and, determined on not losing her, he caught her in his arms. She shrieked in terror, and almost instantly Mrs. Nevin made her appearance. Of her immediate interference Fidelia made not a doubt; but, instead of minding her, she went to the window, which was up, and exclaiming—"Ah, then! musha, my lord! why didn't you pull down the sash?" quietly did so herself, and retired from the room.

"You see," said his lordship, with an exulting laugh, "my conduct is not reckoned quite so flagitious by others as you try to persuade yourself it is."

But, instead of replying to him, with the sudden strength of desperation Fidelia pushed him from her, and darting from the room, ere he had the power of preventing her, was down the stairs and out of the house in a minute. She fled from it, without knowing whither she was going, nor paused till she had got, as she conceived, some distance from it; then cast-

ing her affrighted looks around, she saw a street before her, in which was a stand of carriages. She beckoned to one, and stepping into it, directed the man to the Green, as the only place she could recollect at the moment.

Her situation was overwhelming, but she tried to collect herself, from the necessity there was for obtaining immediate refuge; for, to venture back to the place from which she had escaped was not to be thought, convinced as she was, from what had just occurred there, that, even if not inveigled there through lord Castle Dermot's means, as she had now a misgiving of, still she could have no assurance of being protected from him. But where to seek what she required, stranger as she was in Dublin! While thinking what was to be done, a family she had obtained some knowledge of through the Beaumonts suddenly occurred to her recollection, and accordingly pulling the check-string, she desired the coachman to drive to Mr. Fagan's, linen-draper, in Bride-street.

His shop, in the dirtiest and narrowest part of this dirty and narrow street, excited a sensation of disgust that made her shrink from becoming the inmate of such a place; but her terror of remaining unprotected was too powerful to allow her to yield to fastidiousness, and accordingly entering, she introduced herself to his wife, who was there by herself, with a timid request to know whether she could allow her to remain a few days in her house, or recommend her to another, where she would be equally safe?

"Laws, Miss! to let you be here is quite impossible," said Mrs. Fagan, quietly folding up different articles that were scattered on the counter as she spoke, "for I have no room that's not set; and even if I hadn't, I have given up setting lodgings to ladies, they are so troublesome, always ringing the bell for one fiddle-faddle or another, and taking up the time of a servant for nothing. But, then, how is the old couple? we haven't heard a word from them since we got the last basket of

poultry. Miss Albina is a fine girl, to be sure, by this? Does Mrs. Beaumont like her game of cards as well as ever?"

"Yes, I believe so," replied the agitated Fidelia; "but—" and she renewed her entreaty for Mrs. Fagan to tell her of some lodging, since she could not accommodate her herself.

"Laws, Miss!" she answered, with a look of listless indifference that heightened the anguish of the poor fugitive, from the little interest it argued about her, "there are plenty of bills up."

"But then, as I know no one——"

"Why that, to be sure," and at last she said there was a house at the Green, where she thought she might get what she required—"But 'tis kept by an Englishwoman, and you know they are very particular."

Fidelia eagerly inquired, might she make use of her name? and received the requisite permission; Mrs. Fagan adding, that Mrs. Simpkins, keeping a haberdasher's shop, dealt with them for differ-

ent articles, and would, she made no doubt, like to oblige them.

To her accordingly Fidelia drove; and having here again introduced herself, was received with a look of curiosity and supercilious civility; but not directly did she receive an answer to her demand. At length Mrs. Simpkins condescended to say that she would let her have accommodation in her house, the town not being then full, provided she promised to relinquish the apartments if a superior offer was received; adding, she had a lodger on the second floor on the same terms.

Wearied and exhausted, Fidelia acquiesced, and was accordingly ushered up stairs and conducted through a very handsome suite of rooms, two of the plainest of which she chose, not without a secret wish that she could have met with still plainer, from the exorbitant terms demanded for these.

A shelter being procured, the necessity of supplying herself with a few articles of wearing apparel occurred, fearful of send-

ing for those she had brought with her, lest it should be the means of again exposing her to the attempts of lord Castle Dermot. Accordingly, returning to the coach, she proceeded in it to Grafton-street, in previously passing through which she had observed shops for making the purchases she required. These were soon made, and she took possession of her apartments.

Scarcely was she seated in them, when the servant entered to know her commands for dinner. With a heavy sigh, from the conviction this forced upon her of being utterly thrown upon herself, she gave her a note, observing, any trifling thing would do.

The door of communication between the sitting-room and bed-chamber was open, and, while speaking to her, Fidelia heard the dismal howl of a dog in the garden. Hastening to a window, she looked out, and saw a fine greyhound, evidently, from his lank sides, much neglected, tied up there.—"Poor fellow!"

in a pitying tone she said, "he does not seem to like his confinement."

"Oh no!" the servant replied; "and I am sure the mistress needn't be so ill-natured as to keep him fastened up so: if they were my carpets, I'd rather see the marks of his paws upon them, than keep him, the poor beast, from seeing his master; if you believe me, Miss, they seem to pine for one another. But 'tis strange, to be sure, the nature of these here animals."

"He belongs to your lodger, then?"

"Oh yes, Miss! and if I don't think he minds more about him than he does about himself, for he never sees me that he is not after asking me how poor Ponto does."

"Why not see himself?"

"Oh, he is very bad, Miss, and can't come down. Poor gentleman! 'tis dismal to leave him all alone by himself, without kith or kin to look after him."

"Your mistress—does not she pay him some attention?"

"She, the neger! not she indeed!—no, though she has every day some nice dainty for herself, and especially plenty of fruit, which the poor gentleman above all things likes, though he can afford but little for himself, I believe she never sends him a thing. Oh, Miss! to think of the luck of some people!—if an old uncle didn't die and leave her this fine house and business, without her once dreaming of it!"

Fidelia assented to the observation, but with a much stronger feeling of compassion than envy pervading her mind at the moment. She had observed a fruit-shop near, and there she immediately dispatched Betty to purchase some grapes. She had just received them from her, and was on the point of returning them to her to take up to the invalid, as some sent by her mistress, when Mrs. Simpkins entered, and telling Betty she was wanted below, was on the point of asking Fidelia, with some degree of obsequiousness, whether she felt herself comfortable, when the sight of the grapes prevented her.—"Bless

me!" she exclaimed, "how very like!—But no, to be sure, it can't be—no genteel person would be capable of——"

"Of what, ma'am?" asked Fidelia, surmising what she meant, Betty having shewn her a large jar of grapes in a closet adjoining the sitting-room.

"Oh, nothing, Miss," she replied, a little confused; "only as I didn't know you had sent for any grapes——"

Fidelia turned involuntarily from her, and ringing the bell, went out to meet Betty, to give them to her.

The dislike she had by this time conceived to her landlady made her decide on having as little communication as possible with her: but she soon found she did not require encouragement.

When dinner was brought in, instead of the slight repast she expected, she saw a dinner sufficient for a large party. Was the intimation she had given misunderstood? she asked, her dread of pecuniary distress rendering her displeased at what she saw.

" No," Betty replied; she knew well enough what she meant, but her mistress had taken her money from her, and insisted on going to market herself; " and a scandalous shame I'm sure it was for her," she added, " to do what she has done—but I know what it is for."

To explain was unnecessary, the appearance of Mrs. Simpkins at the instant doing this: she entered under the pretext of seeing that every thing was right, " for I'm very particular, Miss, you must know, about my lodgers," she said. " Upon my word, the dinner looks very comfortable, and I don't much care if I sit down and taste it with you; for Betty was so busy I got nothing hot dressed for myself to-day, and I don't much like cold things;" and so saying, without further ceremony, she seated herself, impatiently calling upon Fidelia to do the same.

Fidelia felt angry, but not being able to prevail on herself to give any indication of this, she quietly sat down.

In the course of the dinner she did not

forget to inquire of Betty, without being overheard by her mistress, whether there was any thing there that could tempt the appetite of the invalid? to which an answer was received in the negative: but no question being necessary respecting poor Ponto, she silently prepared a dinner for him, to the great surprise and high displeasure of Mrs. Simpkins. At first, she did not know what she was about; but when she understood, she protested it was a sin and a shame to pay such attention to a brute; and finally made an effort to seize the plate, which was firmly, however, resisted by Fidelia.

From this time she determined on allowing no further encroachments from her; but she soon found she was no match for her cunning and assurance, and that of course there was no alternative to either submitting to her impositions, or else coming to an explanation with her that might lead to something still more unpleasant. Yet, not without dread did she in consequence find her little stock of

money rapidly diminishing; and what might eventually become of her she trembled to think, for by all at the moment she seemed forgot. Induced by the conduct of lord Castle Dermot to believe some treachery had been practised on her, as was indeed the case, she had written to the countess, acquainting her where she was; but to this received no answer, from a very sufficient cause, namely, the letter being mislaid by Betty after receiving it for the post; and her consequent silence persuaded her she was utterly abandoned by her. To the Beaumonts, too, she had again written, detailing what had occurred, and the consequent forlornness of her situation: but neither from them had she heard; and at length, unable longer to endure the torturing suspense she was experiencing, she repaired one day to Bride-street, to try whether she could learn any satisfactory reason for their silence.

Mr. Fagan only was now visible. In reply to her inquiries, he informed her that he had lately heard by chance that

the family were absent from Cooleamere; but added, that as he shortly expected to hear from Mr. Beaumont, he concluded, in a day or two, he should be able to give her their present address.

This was some consolation to Fidelia, and, a little cheered, she took her leave, saying she would then call.

Still, after so many disappointments as she had experienced, she was afraid to give way entirely to hope, and accordingly, on her return home, deemed it but prudent to examine into the state of her finances, which a secret dread concerning them had hitherto prevented her doing. The result of this examination filled her with dismay; so much more had been expended than she had imagined, that, without the most rigid economy for the future, she saw a possibility of being reduced to the most extreme distress. This conviction rendered her provoked with herself for not having sooner put a stop to the encroachments of her landlady, through which it was she now beheld that possibility. Ac-

cordingly when, on her return, she came to her, with her usual simpering air, to say there was a fine basket of fish below, for which she wanted money, she coldly refused it, telling her not to trouble herself in future about her.

Kindling with spite and vexation, Mrs. Simpkins assured her she should be obeyed; adding, as she flung out of the room, she would for the future take care to admit no one to her house but people of undoubted gentility and fortune.

Trembling at the idea of being in the power of such a woman, Fidelia was unable in any way to divert her thoughts; the pure breezes that blew across her windows from the neighbouring mountains, which with sensations of mingled melancholy and admiration she often sat contemplating—the glimpses she had now and then of the country in a stolen walk, were all unenjoyed by her—she was alive only to a sense of extreme wretchedness. At the time appointed, she again repaired to Mr. Fagan's, but with scarcely power, on

reaching his house, to make her anxious inquiry, from an apprehension of being disappointed. This was but too well founded; Mr. Fagan had not heard, nor could he now tell when he should; but added, if passing again that way in a few days, she might then call.—"But, bless me, Miss, how pale you are!" he suddenly exclaimed. "Shall I get you a glass of water?"

Fidelia bowed, and, a few tears coming to her relief, she was saved from fainting.

When she got home she would be better, Mr. Fagan said, as she could then lie down.

"Oh no! no!" internally she sighed, "not in such a home as mine shall I be better—where no kindred spirit, where no kind friend waits my return—where tears may stream without being pitied—where all is dreary and forlorn, proclaiming me the child of sorrow, the unclaimed of society!" Entreating, should he hear before she called again, to let her know, she at length rose to depart.

The ensuing day another week's lodging was due, which discharged, would leave her but in possession of a few shillings; something therefore must be done; and, after much painful deliberation, she decided on explicitly acquainting Mrs. Simpkins with her situation. Her soul revolted at the measure, but it was one dictated by integrity, and she therefore resolved on not shrinking from it. Should Mrs. Simpkins, after her explanation, allow her to remain another week in her house, she would have no reason to reproach her with deception, if, at the expiration of it, unable to settle with her; and, dreadful as was the thought of being compelled to seek another abode, it was preferable to the idea of being accused of imposition. But though her resolution was taken, she wanted courage for some time after to carry it into effect, so much did she shrink from the invidious sneers of Mrs. Simpkins when she learned her poverty.—"Yet why," she cried, arguing the point with herself, "why should I

shrink from what should not lessen me in my own eyes, conscious as I am of no folly or indiscretion having involved me in my present predicament?"

At length she sent for her. The result of her communication was what she anticipated—scornful sneers and taunting observations; the conference ended, however, in her being allowed to continue another week in the house, but which permission was granted more for the sake of witnessing her distress than from any feeling of pity for it. If the preceding week was unhappy, how still more so was the ensuing one, so much did apprehension now mingle with hope, and so pointed and malicious was the rudeness and inattention she now met with! In no way were her feelings spared: if she received any attention, it was only a mock attention, that compelled her to disclose still more her situation; and the only pleasure she had lately experienced, that of administering to the wants of others, was now denied her; she could no longer make purchases

to tempt the sickly appetite of the invalid, and poor Ponto in vain raised his hollow eyes to the window for the dinner he had hitherto been accustomed to receive from her. Not a knock was heard—not a movement, that she did not fly to the stairs in hopes of its being some letter for her: but another week elapsed without bringing any thing of the kind, and she then again proceeded to Bride-street; but disappointment still awaited her: Mr. Fagan had not heard from Mr. Beaumont—"But all in good time—to be sure we still shall, Miss," he said.

"All in good time!" repeated Fidelia.

Stupified and bewildered, she stood motionless, till the surprise manifested in the countenance of Mr. Fagan by her manner made her recollect herself; mechanically she then began to retrace her way back to the Green. Scarcely conscious of what she was about, more than once was she rudely accosted, and more than once in danger of being run over. At last a vociferous demand for charity roused her from

her abstractions. In her present situation, the application seemed derision: she paused an instant, looked with a bitter smile at the mendicant, and then pointing to a splendid equipage just at the instant drawing up, moved on; but hardly had she done so, ere she became shocked at what had passed.—"The garb of poverty is not yet on me," she said, "how then could the poor mendicant conjecture I myself stood in need of the relief he solicited?—Good God!" she cried, "forgive my involuntary impatience! and though my anguished heart should still in vain seek for sympathy, my throbbing temples for rest, still indue me with resignation to thy will!"

She was about knocking at the door, when Mrs. Simpkins, spying her from the shop, called her in.—"Well, it's to be hoped, Miss," she said, "you haven't had your walk to-day for nothing? I have been looking out a twopenny stamp to write you out a receipt for the week's lodging."

Fidelia sunk upon a chair, the dew of absolute terror and weakness damping her forehead, and giving a ghastliness to her countenance.—" I have not been more fortunate," she said.

Mrs. Simpkins repeated her words with a scream.—" What! no tidings yet from your friend?"

Fidelia mournfully shook her head.

" Well, if here a'n't a fine to do!—So I suppose I shall lose a week's lodging by you?"

" Not eventually, I hope," was the languid reply.

" You hope!—Well, I am sure I am much obliged to Mrs. Fagan for sending me such a lodger; I might well have suspected her kindness—well have surmised, if she liked you herself, she would not have sent you to me."

" You cannot accuse me of having deceived you," said Fidelia.

" I don't know that; I'm sure, when first you came here, you acted as if you had money enough, buying fruit for a

person you knew nothing of; no one could have thought then that, in the course of a few days, you would have wanted necessaries for yourself. The end of the matter, however, is, you don't expect to stay no longer here, I suppose?"

"No," Fidelia replied.

"Well, and before you go, who is to pay me? You can't suppose I'll let you off till I am settled with?"

Fidelia hesitated—her very soul revolted from the idea of supplication to such a being; but, at the thought of what probably awaited her should she be driven forth, destitute as she was, she shrunk in utter dismay.—"Listen to me," she implored, as in anguish unutterable she wrung her hands: "the friend I expect to hear from, I will not, cannot, dare not believe," she added, with a frenzied expression of countenance, "means to forsake me; allow me therefore for a few days longer to remain."

"What! to die of starvation? and, in addition to the loss of what you now

owe me, have the additional expence of burying you? Sure you don't suppose I don't know how you have been living this last week? God keep me from lodgers that live upon bread and water! No, Miss, 'tis all fudge and nonsense, I'm sure, about your friend, as you call him; so go you must."

"Yet hear me," said Fidelia. "I heard you complain, the other day, of the loss of the young woman that did muslin-work for you; allow me for a short time to be her substitute, and you will not eventually lose by complying with my request."

Mrs. Simpkins hesitated—self-interest was one of her governing principles, and she had seen specimens of Fidelia's work that convinced her she could not suffer by acceding to this proposal: but then to give up the gratification of driving her to the extremity she dreaded! At length she consented, selfishness predominating; and the tortured Fidelia bowed in gratitude for even this temporary respite from despair.

CHAPTER V.

"We, ignorant of ourselves,
Beg often our own harms, which the wise Powers
Deny us for our good: so find the profit,
By losing of our prayers."

HER task immediately commenced, and in a few days she had done some articles in so superior a style, as induced Mrs. Simpkins to decide on sending them to a particular customer, a little way out of town. The messenger was a young English girl, but who being a great loiterer whenever sent out by herself, she said, she asked Fidelia to accompany her. Fidelia hesitated, but not knowing how to excuse herself, consented, and accordingly set out early in the evening with Miss Becky.

The walk was pleasant, and she was returning home revived by it, when, chancing

to glance at some ladies that were passing, to her inexpressible surprise as well as consternation she beheld Mrs. Bryerly and her daughters, whom she had been led to imagine then in England. All that she had suffered from their persecutions, all that she might be made to suffer from this unexpected encounter, occurred to her at the moment, filling her with dread and apprehension.

"Bless me!" exclaimed Mrs. Bryerly, "who could have thought of such a thing? Well, it's a true saying, that 'men meet where mountains don't.' When did you come to Dublin, Miss Fiddy? and pray where, or with whom are you?"

Miss Fiddy, however, could only stare with a look that seemed to argue her irresolute whether or not to betake herself to flight.

"Why, bless me! I believe we have both confounded and dumbfounded you! Well, you needn't look so scared—I assure you 'tis some time since we quite decided on washing our hands entirely of you; that

is—I mean," she added, as if recollecting herself a little—" that is—I mean, as far as concerned any interference about your inclinations; though, in any attempt we made to induce you to act contrary to them, we certainly had nothing but your own good in view. However, that's of no consequence now—it's no time now to be explaining or vindicating what was either thought or meant. A little unexpected business brought us to Dublin, and before we leave it for England, which we purpose almost immediately doing, I should like to know how you are situated, and whether there is any service you require from us."

Appeased, composed, delighted by the conclusion of this speech, the natural feelings of Fidelia now burst forth—those feelings of attachment that, spite of ill treatment, lurked within her heart, for those she had so early and long known. That the present kindness was proffered from any sinister motive, she could not ima-

gine; a still longer delay in hearing satisfactorily from the Beaumonts might occur, she feared, through their absence from Cooleamere, for of yet hearing, as she wished, from them, she could not doubt, after her explanatory letters; and accordingly desiring the girl to precede them, she ventured to explain her present dilemma, but without revealing the circumstances that had led to it, saying, what was indeed the fact, that the story was too long and too agitating now to enter upon.

Both Mrs. Bryerly and her daughters listened to her with great attention, but, whether the attention of curiosity or interest, remained yet to be ascertained. Mrs. Bryerly expressed the greatest indignation at the unworthy manner in which she had been treated by Mrs. Simpkins, protesting she would not leave Dublin till she had extricated her from her power. She expected, the ensuing day, a remittance from Mr. Bryerly, then in England, she said, part of which she would cheerfully spare

her for the purpose of enabling her to settle with the odious woman; and in the mean time, she and the girls would accompany her to the house, in order to let her know she need not have been so mistrustful.

That Fidelia was all gratitude at this unexpected kindness may readily be conceived.—"Oh, what a lucky chance," in the joy of her lightened heart she exclaimed, "that we met!—Now that I review all I have lately gone through, I wonder I have been able to bear up against it."

"Lord, what a horrid wretch that lodginghouse-woman of yours must be, Fiddy!" cried Miss Bryerly. "'Pon honour, I should like, of all things, to devise some plot for punishing her."

"How I should laugh to hear of her house being burnt down—or her strongbox broke open—or some mischievous hoax being played on her!" added her sister.

"Lord, girls, don't be talking non-

sense!" said their mother; "she'll be mortified enough, I dare say, when she finds that Fidelia has friends to take her part."

Mrs. Simpkins was much surprised at seeing her return so accompanied. Fidelia lost no time in explaining that her companions were particular friends whom she had met by chance, and who, acquainting them how disagreeably she was at present situated, had come on purpose to assure Mrs. Simpkins there was no occasion for the apprehensions she entertained on her account.

"And I am sure, at all events, ma'am," said Mrs. Bryerly, throwing herself on a chair and kicking out her foot with an air of scornful disdain, "if the person of respectability you would be thought, a paltry week's lodging was not worth making such a fuss about. Every one is liable at times to disappointments, and I really am both so astonished and indignant at the manner in which you have treated Miss Hawthorn, owing to the trifling ones she has recently experienced, that, on dis-

charging your demand to-morrow, I shall insist on her quitting your house, if not assured of her henceforth meeting in it that respect she has a right to. There are many much superior in every way, where she could with equal propriety be accommodated till sent for by her friends."

Mrs. Simpkins was one of those servile and cringing characters whom insolence and haughtiness are sure of awing; the imperative tone in which Mrs. Bryerly spoke, united to her style of dress, convinced her she was a woman of consequence, and accordingly she bore her reprimands with a patience that astonished Fidelia, from the specimens she had had of the insolence and violence of her nature.—"Dear me, ma'am!" she replied, "I'm sure I should be sorry to be considered capable of treating any one of respectability—that is, any one I was sure was so, with rudeness; but, lauk! there are so many people about, pretending to be what they are not!"

"Oh, pray don't fatigue me with at-

tempting excuses for your conduct: you have already heard my sentiments respecting it, and I assure you I shan't retract them.—But, lord, my dear!" turning to Fidelia, "have you no other place to receive your visitors in? I am quite fatigued with my walk, and as I have not yet drank tea, should be glad of it."

Fidelia, who without her assistance had not the power of giving the desired refreshment, now cast a timid glance at Mrs. Simpkins, who perfectly comprehending it, and anxious besides to make an effort for doing away the unfavourable impression her previous conduct to her, she was given to understand, had made, instantly invited the ladies into her parlour, where the tea-things were now laid; and while ringing for Betty to procure some cakes, begged to know from Mrs. Bryerly, as she appeared heated with her walk, whether she would like some raspberry-vinegar, or a glass of English capillaire-and-water, which she assured her was excellent, being of her own making.

"Oh, I dare say—but I never touch such trash—I never allow any thing but foreign liqueurs and foreign wines to be used in my house. I shall thank you for a glass of wine-and-water, and then pray don't let tea be delayed."

Mrs. Simpkins courtsied submissively, and was shewing the way to the parlour, when Mrs. Bryerly was stopt by her daughters begging her to look at some bonnets that had attracted their notice.

"Lord, girls, how can you be so silly!" she exclaimed, yet stopping to do as they requested. "I hope you don't think, after the handsome bonnets I have just purchased you, I shall think of yet getting others for you?"

"But, laws, ma'! these are so pretty!"

"So they are indeed," cried Mrs. Simpkins, courtsying; "the milliner I deal with is reckoned the tastiest in Dublin—her things are often mistaken for French ones, I assure you. Pray try these bonnets on—they would become you vastly,

I am sure; and whether you purchase them or not, you are equally welcome."

"Nay, except we were sure that mamma would let us have them."

"Upon my word I have no patience with you, girls!" returned mamma. "This is the way that I can never enter a shop with you, that I am not robbed, through your means, of all my money."

"But, mamma, these are so very delicate!"

"Oh, to be sure, very beautiful, or you wouldn't desire them!—Well, Mrs.——"

"Simpkins, ma'am," with a low courtesy.

"Well, Mrs. Simpkins, as I see I shall be teased to death if I don't gratify these extravagant girls, at one word, what is the lowest price of these bonnets?"

"Seven guineas and a half."

"Seven guineas and a half!—Oh, good-bye to you!" and she moved towards the parlour.

"Well, stop, ma'am," said Mrs. Simpkins; "I'll take off a crown, just to prove I am not what you have been led to ima-

gine; for when I do, upon my life I shall have no profit."

"No, certainly, I believe you, not Jewish profit, of cent. per cent. But come, to be at one word with you, there's a cap in the window I think would suit me, so, if you throw it into the bargain, I'll give you what you first asked."

"Indeed, ma'am, you are quite too hard," returned Mrs. Simpkins, but unpinning the cap as she spoke.

"Well, since I've bought one thing, I may as well buy another from you," said Mrs. Bryerly. "I perceive you have sarsnets for sale, so let me look at some, for I want to purchase three dresses."

The sarsnets were joyfully taken down, and being approved of, the dresses were bought, which, with appropriate trimmings, the bonnets, cap, and some other articles in the haberdashery line, made Mrs. Bryerly's bill amount to a considerable sum.

On taking out her purse to discharge it, she found she had not quite so much

money about her—" However, that's of no consequence," she added, carelessly putting up her purse again, " for, by the time tea is over, I should be afraid of returning without some one to protect us. Whoever, therefore, you procure for the purpose, can bring the parcel with him, and get the money in return; but don't omit giving him a stamp receipt, for I am very particular in these matters."

Fidelia could not help smiling at the complete subjection to which Mrs. Simpkins was subdued by the manner in which she had been now treated—so calculated, in Fidelia's opinion, to have had quite a contrary effect upon her.

Immediately after tea, her haughty guests rose to depart, attended by a messenger with the parcel and receipt. The moment they were gone, with a strange kind of perverseness, Fidelia thought, she launched out in their praise, nor ceased till the return of her messenger. The instant she heard his voice she ran out, so impatient was she to receive what she ex-

pected he had brought her; her own receipt, however, was all he had for her; but to Fidelia he gave a note from Mrs. Bryerly, stating that, on examining her pocketbook, she found she had nothing less than a fifty-pound-note in it, which, unable to get changed at that late hour, she was compelled to defer the discharge of her bill till the next day, when Mrs. Simpkins might be sure of it, and also of what she (Fidelia) owed her.

Fidelia was pleased to find that the sum she had promised her did not depend, as in the first instance she had mentioned, on a chance remittance from Mr. Bryerly, but owing, she concluded, to forgetfulness at the moment; in short, she could not bring herself to entertain a doubt to her prejudice.

With a heart lighter than it had for several preceding ones been, she rose the next morning, resolving, as soon as matters were arranged with Mrs. Simpkins, to take a walk to Cullen's Wood, where the Bryerlys lodged. But, alas! well for

us is it that we do not know what a day may bring forth!—The messenger of Mrs. Simpkins was punctual to the time appointed, but instead of bringing back what was expected, again brought back the receipt, with another note for Fidelia, which, with a sickening presentiment of something unpleasant, she now tremblingly opened, Mrs. Simpkins reading over her shoulder. It was as follows:—

"*To Miss Hawthorn.*

"DEAR FIDDY,

"Being called away at an early hour this morning, my small bill with your landlady could not be settled. Should she have any objection, the old quiz, to letting me continue in her books, when you are settling your own account with her, which, I dare say, one way or other, you'll soon be enabled to do (for you know you have a happy knack in making friends), you can settle mine, and which, considering the large sum you are indebted to Mr.

Bryerly, you can't think very unreasonable, I conceive, my asking; indeed, that you should never have thought about discharging this appears to me extraordinary; but you follow the old maxim, I presume, of thinking you may make free with friends. In great haste,

"Yours, E. B."

Language could but faintly convey an idea of the persecuted Fidelia's feelings on the perusal of this cruel billet; she saw no means of extricating herself from the terrible situation in which it had placed her—of averting utter disgrace and shame; nothing, she could not avoid seeing, could be stronger against her than appearances—even by the most candid she could not hope for acquittal in the present instance. Oh, Heavens! what barbarity, to place her in such a predicament!—this was indeed to crush the bruised reed! In agony she clasped her hands, and hid her face in them.

"Ay, you may well hide your face, you artful minx!" exclaimed the furious Mrs. Simpkins, as she picked up the note from the ground, where through agitation she had let it fall: "but dearly shall you rue this piece of dexterity, clever as you think yourself—you shall find, for once at least, that you have outwitted yourself. Treat you with respect indeed!—oh yes, I'll treat you with all the respect you merit. If I am not paid this very day, both what you owe me and what I have been so genteelly tricked out of, rely upon it you shall have another lodging before night, without the trouble of seeking one."

Fidelia involuntarily dropt on her knees. —"Appearances are against me, I know," she said, "but still I am innocent. Oh, if you could be induced to believe me so—induced but to wait a few days longer!"

"To be sure, and you would requite my forbearance by bringing me a few more good customers!" Then furiously ringing the bell, she desired the servant-girl to go immediately for Mr. Fagan.

The girl was withdrawing to obey her, when, springing from the floor, Fidelia interposed between her and the door.—"Oh, have mercy!" she exclaimed, addressing herself to Mrs. Simpkins; "tie me, confine me, treat me as you will, only do not expose me to disgrace. But a few days and I am convinced I shall be able to clear myself of every suspicion."

Utterly regardless of her agony, Mrs. Simpkins, stamping at Betty, demanded the reason of her not obeying her; and she was accordingly quitting the room, when the postman entered the shop, inquiring if a Miss Hawthorn lodged there?

Fidelia sprang to him, and receiving the letter he had for her, ran back with it to the parlour.—"Oh God! oh God! receive my thanks!" she cried, as her swimming eyes were raised to heaven.

It came from Mr. Fagan, to acquaint her, that though he had not heard immediately from Mr. Beaumont himself, he had heard of him through a friend at Cooleamere, and had the pleasure of telling

her that with Mrs. Beaumont he was now at a place called Roheny, near Dublin, and that it was the general opinion in the country he had met with some good fortune.

" Oh, I knew, I knew," said Fidelia, sobbingly, " that there must be some particular reason for not noticing my letters. Their intended journey to town was certainly the reason of their silence, and by now hastening to them, I shall only anticipate a summons from them."

Ere she made an attempt to equip herself for her excursion, however, she handed the letter to Mrs. Simpkins, who having attentively perused it, said, in an altered tone, she hoped, for both their sakes, she might not be disappointed in her present expectations; adding, that of course the sooner she went the better; and as the ride else would be lonely for her, Becky should go with her.

Not, however, on this account was it that she decided sending her, but entirely from the wariness of her disposition; and

to this also was owing her refusing to let Fidelia's trunk accompany her. Fidelia, however, was in no state at present to investigate motives—all she was anxious for was to get as quickly as possible to Roheny.

A jaunting-car was the vehicle suggested by Mrs. Simpkins for her conveyance, which she made no objection to, from being led to believe it was the readiest one she could procure. The drive was pleasant, and in about an hour and a half they reached the place.

The exact residence of Mr. Beaumont was soon ascertained, and proceeding to it, Fidelia beheld a very handsome house in the midst of highly ornamented grounds. At the idea of being the inmate of such a place she was quite delighted, and anxiously inquiring for Mr. Beaumont, whom she wished first to see, had the satisfaction of being informed he was at home. She was shewn into a parlour, but instead of giving her name, as required, merely desired the servant to tell Mr. Beaumont a young person wished to speak to him.

Her heart began to palpitate violently—confident of her letters having been received, she could not distrust a favourable reception; agitation however was irrepressible, from the recollection of the circumstances under which she had quitted Cooleamere.

Mr. Beaumont did not keep her long waiting—she soon heard his well-known step approaching, and as the parlour-door was thrown open, started up to meet him. She became transfixed, however, by the more-than-surprise his countenance manifested on seeing her.—"You the person that wanted to speak to me!" he exclaimed —"Well, really this is unexpected."

"Yet, after my last letter, I—I did not, sir," said Fidelia, stammering through extreme agitation, "think it would have been so entirely so."

"No, no—perhaps not," with quickness he replied. "But tell me, was it from Mr. Fagan you learned my being here? and did he give you any further particulars?"

Fidelia briefly acquainted him with what she had heard from his friend.

"Well, and you came to offer your congratulations?" he rejoined, preventing, by the hastiness of the remark, the inquiry she was about making after Mrs. Beaumont and Albina.

Fidelia hesitated—she knew not what to think of his manner, but she had gone too far to recede; her situation was desperate, and, after a short pause, she candidly explained it, and the hopes that had led her to him.

"How flattering the high opinion you must, from these hopes, entertain of my generosity! You probably thought, too, that by giving us an opportunity of again serving you, you should afford us one for also serving ourselves, by again giving us the power of securing so amiable and agreeable an inmate?"

"Oh, sir!" in inconceivable agitation exclaimed Fidelia, "has any thing new occurred to injure me in your opinion?

—your looks, your words, your manner—all tend to make me fear there has."

"Any thing new!" with unutterable scorn he repeated—"perfidious girl! let your own conscience, as I once before said on a similar occasion, answer that. Scarcely can I confine my indignation within proper bounds. But I shall take care that this is the last time you shall ever obtrude on me—Go! go! and let the shame, the obloquy, and distress, that now overwhelm you, have a salutary effect; you are yet young enough to amend, though to retrieve the friendship and esteem you have lost is utterly impossible. Had you practised solely against myself, I might have pardoned you; but to practise against the innocent, affectionate young creature that loved you as a sister, was a proof of such baseness, such insensibility to kindness and feminine feelings, as makes your idea abhorrent to me."

"Oh God! did I merit these reproaches, madness must seize me!" cried Fidelia.

She was advancing towards him, to try and prevail on him to be more explicit, when, starting back, he rushed out of the room, and the next instant a servant entered, to say he was come to shew her out.

Fidelia sunk upon a chair—her eyes were cast despairingly to heaven, her clasped hands then fell lifeless on her lap, and her head dropt back. A violent gush of tears was the first symptom she gave of returning animation; but, through absolute despair, her eyes for some time remained closed. At length a violent ringing roused her. Convinced it was for the purpose of knowing whether she had yet quitted the house, she directly rose, and taking the arm of her astonished companion, proceeded to the car.

"Well, if I'd be in your place for more than I can name, Miss!" said Miss Becky, as they drove off. "When we get back to town, 'missis will be in such a taking when she finds there's no money forthcoming—after the expence, too, of paying for a car to send us out!—Lauk-a-mercy!

if that old gentlemen wasn't worse than a mad 'orse!—if he didn't seem quite angry that we got hentrance to the 'ouse!—To be sure, Miss, you must have done something very bad to him, to make him so spiteful?"

Fidelia wrung her hands, in dread of what Miss Becky thus made her anticipate—almost was she tempted to betake herself to flight.—"Oh, I cannot go on!" she cried; "I have not courage—I have not strength to encounter what awaits me at Mrs. Simpkins's." Yet how avoid it? whither could she go? On the earth there seemed no resting-place for her.

She was leaning almost fainting against the shoulder of her companion, when a well-known voice aroused her, and looking up, she beheld Conolly on horseback. Instinctively she called to the man to stop, and hastily getting off, went to the foot-path, followed by Conolly, who instantly alighted. Joy mingled with her surprise at seeing him; but in a moment the improbability of his being able to render her

any service became too apparent not to make her again sink into despair.

"Oh, Miss Fidelia! for God's sake, what's the matter?" demanded Conolly, in tears indicative of the alarm excited by her distress.

Fidelia scarcely knew how to reply; yet, when she thought of his former services, she knew not why she should feel humbled by disclosing her present situation.—"Oh, Conolly, I am overwhelmed with misfortune," she replied, and briefly proceeded to relate the cruel predicament in which she was placed by the unprincipled conduct of Mrs. Bryerly.

"Bad luck to her and her sarsnet dresses!" exclaimed the enraged Conolly, "to make you suffer so much on her account—you who, if you were as you ought to be, might think it a condescension to notice her!"

"As I ought to be!" repeated Fidelia, raising her swoln eyes with a look of earnestness to him.

" Yes, Miss—that is—" a good deal confused, " as every one must think you ought to be, from your looks. But good heart!—keep a good heart, was always the advice of father Noonen, our parish priest; and so, Miss Fidelia, give me your direction, and, with the blessing of God, living or dead, you shall see me before night."

Fidelia complied with his request, though hopeless of any thing from it but a friendly call to inquire after her, and returning to the car, again drove on.

Just as they entered Sackville-street, a heavy shower came on. In extreme consternation, Miss Becky directly called to the man to stop, protesting, if they did not get shelter, the new green bow of her bonnet would be spoiled.

To put off as long as she could what she dreaded was Fidelia's anxious wish; she accordingly alighted, and was following her companion to a shop, when, perceiving her progress impeded, she raised her dejected eyes, and beheld lord Castle Der-

mot before her. With a faint exclamation of mingled terror and surprise she started back, and instinctively snatching away the hand he had attempted to take, hurried after Miss Becky, who, unmindful of all but her green bow, had scudded on, and was now turning into a shop.

Lord Castle Dermot, however, was not easily to be discountenanced: he followed, reproaching her for unkindness, and vehemently inveighing against her recent flight.

For some time she remained silent; but finding he persevered in teasing her, bursting with indignation she suddenly turned to him, and protesting she would not speak to him again, proceeded to declare it was her determination not to quit the place where she then was till he had departed, lest she should be further annoyed by him. His lordship, however, as if utterly regardless of this declaration, only laughed and rallied.

The shop they had entered was a con-

fectioner's, and Miss Becky was soon tempted to evince her liking of its contents. Lord Castle Dermot presented an ice to Fidelia, which she rejected; but perceiving the woman of the shop beginning to look scowlingly at her, she took up a jelly, but had scarcely done so ere the recollection of the emptiness of her purse induced her to lay it down again with precipitation, and inquire of Miss Becky whether she had any change about her?

With her mouth so crammed she could scarcely reply, Miss Becky answered in the negative; adding, her missis, as she called her, had given nothing more than sufficed to pay the turnpike.

"Good God! in what a predicament have you involved me then!" cried Fidelia, involuntarily making an effort, as she spoke, to prevent her taking up any more cakes.

But, firmly opposing this—"Lauk, Miss!" she exclaimed, "you needn't grudge, I'm sure, paying for what one

eats here; after our long ride, I'm sure one's a right to be 'ungry."

Fidelia retreated to her seat, overpowered by the exposure she saw approaching. What encouragement might it not give to lord Castle Dermot to persevere in his persecutions! She grew sick with apprehension, and was only kept from fainting by the timely assistance of his lordship and the woman of the shop.

"Good Heavens! what's the matter?" whispered the former. "You alarm me, my dear girl."

"Why, the truth on't, sir, I believe is," said Miss Becky, as she took the place of Fidelia's other assistant, who was now called away, "neither of us have got no money; and so she got frightened, thinking what we should do when the things came to be paid for."

With the burning blush of shame now succeeding the ashy paleness of dismay on her cheek, Fidelia rose and walked to the door. She attempted not to turn her eyes,

but her ear soon convinced her of what was passing.

Lord Castle Dermot quickly joined her, and forcibly taking her hand—"Positively I am angry with you," he cried, "to let an inadvertence in coming out occasion you such distress when I was by."

Fidelia pulled away her hand.—"I am ill, my lord," she said; "and if you have humanity, you will no longer persist in tormenting me. You know my resolution, and will add to my distress by obliging me to remain longer here."

He called her inexorable, and might have persevered in longer remaining, but for the probability of being able to obtain her address from the carman, who had slowly followed. Accordingly, affecting a complaisance to her wishes he would not otherwise have shewn, he took a rallying leave of her for the present, as he said, and beckoning the driver to a distance, obtained from him what he required.

At length, after all the cruel and agi-

tating incidents of the morning, Fidelia found herself again at Mrs. Simpkins's. Her heart seemed to die within her as she entered the house; and when, on hearing her voice, Mrs. Simpkins ran eagerly out to know the cause of her return, she fell, through absolute terror, apparently lifeless at her feet.

On recovering, the first object her eyes fell on was Conolly.—"You are come to see me die, Conolly," she cried, half glancing at him, and again closing her eyes.

"Die!" he repeated, in a broken voice —"Oh, Miss Fidelia, for God's sake cheer up! There's a friend, a noble friend, waiting for you, and all will be settled immediately to your satisfaction."

"What, have you been to Mr. Beaumont's?" demanded Fidelia, with suddenly-returning animation.

Conolly answered evasively; and then addressing himself to Mrs. Simpkins—"Come, let's have your account, my good woman," he said, "without further delay,

that I may see the tot, and settle with you."

"Good woman!" repeated Mrs. Simpkins, with the greatest scorn, whom some previous observations he had made during the insensibility of Fidelia had not by any means tended to conciliate—"I'd have you to know, sir, I'm no good woman!"

"Well, they say 'tis not polite to contradict," returned Conolly; "so, devil take me if I contradict you!"

Great as was the rage of Mrs. Simpkins, still she did not delay doing what was required; and in a few minutes more Fidelia found herself seated in a carriage, which Conolly had brought for the express purpose of carrying her from the house.

CHAPTER VI.

" And that should teach us,
There's a Divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will."

WHAT a deliverance!—But by whom had it been effected? Once she thought of the person in whose service she believed Conolly to be; but she quickly dismissed the idea, from a persuasion, notwithstanding the humble situation of Conolly, of there being too great a delicacy in his feelings to allow of his applying to him on her account. By the Beaumonts, then, it must have been effected. Thinking so, she felt surprised when, in the course of a few minutes, the coach stopped at the contiguous side of the Green, at an old massive mansion. While Conolly was knocking, her eyes eagerly ran over it, and she could

not help thinking it had a very cheerless aspect.

The moment the door was opened, Conolly ran down the steps to assist her out. As she alighted, she demanded to whom she was going? but, without replying, he merely begged her to go on. She obeyed, and from a hall of noble dimensions was conducted up a corresponding staircase to a spacious drawing-room, at the entrance of which a lady, very lovely, though not very young, received her with open arms, and kissing her cheek, bade her welcome. —"You are surprised," she said, with a benevolent smile, "to meet with this reception from a stranger; personally I am so, but not in reality. But you must repress inquiries—I am bound to silence on all that must excite your curiosity. My enforced silence, however, will not, I trust, prevent your allowing me to cultivate your regard; it will add to any happiness I may experience," and here a sigh stole from her, "to be permitted to contribute to yours."

The wondering Fidelia thanked her as well as agitation and surprise would permit, but could not avoid acknowledging a strong solicitude to know how she had become so interested about her, and whether Conolly had any thing to say in introducing her to her notice?

Mrs. Stovendale (as she informed her was her name, a name which Fidelia could not call to her recollection having ever heard before) smilingly told her it would be an infringement on what she had promised to conceal if she told her; and, for the present, Fidelia was fain to remain content to be kept in ignorance of what she so naturally desired to know.

So little satisfied, however, was she with the silence respecting it, that, differently situated, she would assuredly have endeavoured to procure other protection. Yet there was nothing in the appearance of Mrs. Stovendale that had not a tendency to inspire confidence: her manners announced her to belong to a superior class

of society, and her countenance was expressive of every thing that was amiable and affectionate. Her residence, too, was calculated to inspire this. The mansion, both externally and internally, had an air of grandeur and magnificence, but still, at the same time, a sombre one. The room into which she was ushered was hung with crimson damask, the ponderous chairs were covered with the same, and richly gilt; the glasses were superb, and every thing else suitable; but still, notwithstanding its gorgeousness, it had a gloomy appearance, and the effect it was calculated to have upon the imagination was heightened by the profound stillness that prevailed within the house—so unlike what might have been expected in one of that description.

Mrs. Stovendale having given her time to look about her and collect herself, took her by the hand and led her to a further door, which, throwing open, revealed to her a room corresponding with the one they were in. Reading, in a recumbent

attitude on a sofa in this, was a gentleman in a *robe de chambre*, and with every appearance of recent illness.

"The young friend we were expecting, my dear," said Mrs. Stovendale, leading forward Fidelia.

Mr. Stovendale, as this address announced him, rose to welcome her, but the hand which Fidelia was extending to meet his she was prevented immediately giving by the bounding forward of a dog, whom, as he jumped about her with every indication of delight, she discovered to be Ponto.

The mystery thickened. Was it possible that the invalid she now saw sitting in luxurious ease was the neglected invalid for whom her compassionate feelings had lately been so interested? With difficulty could she check the interrogation that trembled on her lips—with difficulty her recognition of the grateful Ponto: but not knowing what it might be proper for her to appear to know, she determined to observe the greatest caution. More than

once she was inclined to believe herself mistaken with regard to the dog, notwithstanding his apparent recognition of her, from the great improbability there seemed of his master being the person whom she had so recently been taught to pity; but she was soon put out of all doubt on the subject, by hearing him presently called by the name she knew him by.

The day was by this time advanced, and preparations for dinner soon began to be made in the room where Mr. Stovendale was sitting, as he was still an invalid, his lady said, and it was requisite to nurse him carefully, as they had a journey to go in the course of a day or two.

Was she to be the companion of this journey? Fidelia wondered: if so, could it excite surprise her making the inquiries that were now prohibited? Strangely situated as she felt herself, she could not make those efforts to converse which otherwise she might have done, from the pleasant topics started from time to time by Mrs. Stovendale, and the sweetness

and endearing kindness of her manner. Unlike her, Mr. Stovendale was thoughtful and abstracted; and when he did make attempts to be companionable, there was often a peevishness and asperity in his remarks and manner that was unpleasant.

At an early hour Fidelia was conducted to her bedchamber by Mrs. Stovendale herself, where, having repeated the assurances of friendship she had given her at their first meeting, she shortly left her to her own reflections.

These were not by any means of a nature to recompose her disturbed mind—the more she dwelt on her present situation, the more perplexed and bewildered she became. Hers might well be called the romance of real life, she conceived, so improbable appeared the incidents she had met with. To be thrown, in the mysterious manner she was, upon utter strangers, and find herself entirely at their mercy, was a circumstance that could not but astonish and alarm. Yet every moment had tended to heighten her confidence in

her new protectress; she had watched her every look—she had dwelt on her every word—and the more she did so, the more was she inclined to believe she might be at ease with her. To evince any distrust, then, was certainly to act contrary to her feelings, and to the dictates of prudence, from the probability there was of irreparably offending by such a circumstance; yet she could not avoid wishing to know a little more of those to whom she thus found herself committed, and trusted that from Conolly she should obtain this satisfaction.

Truly grateful, however, to Heaven for present protection, she at length retired to that repose she so much needed, completely exhausted by all she had gone through that day. Sol had shot more than a timorous ray through the silken curtains of her bed ere she awoke the next morning: with a heart lightened from the idea of not having the scowling looks of Mrs. Simpkins to encounter, she arose, and found a trunk labelled with her name be-

side the bed, filled with an assortment of every thing needful. How grateful did she feel for this kind attention! and what a still further conviction did it afford of her destitute situation being completely known to her new friends!

While musing on the subject, Mrs. Stovendale tapped at the door; and on being admitted, affectionately saluted her, and said she came to see whether she wanted any thing, and to conduct her to breakfast.

Fidelia hoped to have seen Conolly this day, but she neither saw nor heard any thing of him; and at length she was informed that the ensuing day was the one fixed for the journey that had been mentioned the preceding night. Some kind of confidence she now deemed it but right to have established between her and her new protectress, and accordingly, without further procrastination, she proceeded to inform Mrs. Stovendale of every particular she knew relative to herself—not without a hope that, in the course of her story, observations might be elicited that might

lead to the discovery of what she herself wished to know. Mrs. Stovendale, however, was completely on her guard; she listened with profound attention—wept at times—more than once kissed and sighed over her; but not a word escaped her lips that could give birth even to conjecture; and at last Fidelia was forced to see that she must be satisfied to remain in her present ignorance.

The journey was to commence at an early hour, she was informed; accordingly she was up betimes, and had just finished dressing, when a servant came to take her trunk to the carriage that was already waiting. She followed, and met Mr. and Mrs. Stovendale in the hall. It was a cold raw morning in November, and as Mr. Stovendale looked abstractedly about him while the things were putting into the coach, he seemed as if he internally shuddered at the idea of facing it. Fidelia had before seen a shade of melancholy in the countenance of Mrs. Stovendale, but it was now deepened to absolute dejection;

she evidently tried to suppress her feelings, but as her eyes fell upon the shuddering figure of her husband, tears coursed one another down her pale cheek.

Fidelia knew not what there was to sympathize in; still, however, her spirits were affected by what she saw, and in cheerless silence the party entered the carriage—a silence that remained unbroken till they came to the Canal Harbour in Porto Bello.

Here alighting, Mr. Stovendale, with a satirical smile, inquired of Fidelia whether she had ever travelled by one of these Irish barges? looking towards a boat on the point of setting off.

She answered in the negative.

"You have a pleasure to come then," he said, handing her on board, followed by Mrs. Stovendale.

They immediately descended to the cabin, which appeared to Fidelia very comfortable. Mr. Stovendale, however, as if of quite a contrary opinion, shrugged his shoulders on entering, and with a look

of utter contempt made his way to the fire.

In a few minutes they were joined by other passengers; and as they seated themselves, efforts were made to enter into conversation: these, however, by Mr. Stovendale were all uniformly repelled, not merely with coldness, but often with almost rudeness.

"A fine morning at last, sir," said a gentleman who took a seat beside him, on the sun breaking out through the dense fog that had before obscured it.

"Possibly, sir," in the most fastidious tone returned Mr. Stovendale, and without deigning to notice him, "by your barometer, but not mine," pulling up the cape of his greatcoat about him.

"Any news, sir?" asked another passenger, perceiving him looking over a newspaper.

"Yes, sir," he replied, in the tone in which he had just before spoken, "and if age can improve it, as it does wine, it must be good, for 'tis a week old."

On breakfast being brought in, he demanded of the attendant whether she thought they had any intention of bombarding any of the places they were passing, that she had brought them in bullets? On her bringing him an egg less done, he then asked whether she supposed he wanted to clear his voice, by bringing him in what was raw? And in this way he went on, to the amusement of some, the surprise of others, and the indescribable distress of Mrs. Stovendale, who, by the most unremitting attentions, sought to prevent his having any occasion for complaint.

Fidelia was astonished at his petulance —it was unworthy both of his sex and age, she conceived, little aware that it had its origin, not in indisposition, but a wounded spirit, exasperated with itself from a consciousness of indiscretion; and, even if she had surmised the truth, still would she have wondered at and condemned it, since certainly she would have thought the ills we bring upon ourselves we should at least patiently bear. A per-

son of luxurious habits, however, must undergo a long coercion in the school of adversity ere the offending Adam can be completely whipped out of him, or he can be brought to acknowledge suffering the due recompence of folly.

The day clearing still further, she went upon deck shortly after breakfast, and now and then mixed in conversation with some of the passengers that followed. In the features of the country through which she was passing there was nothing particularly striking, but still in whatever is new there is something interesting. Large buildings in different directions in ruins, built for different businesses and manufactories, gave a deplorable idea of the distress that had in a degree fallen upon the country—a distress which it did not require one to be a profound politician to be able to account for, namely, to the arrangement that rendered indispensable the partial emigration of the chief people of the kingdom, and of course, with them, the voluntary abandonment of it by those not only con-

nected with them, but who liked to follow where fashion led the way.

In the course of a few hours the boat stopt at ———, where it was met by another: into this the Stovendales and Fidelia went; and now, for the first time, she learned whither they going, namely, to a village called E——, about thirty miles from Dublin. To this a cut through the Bog of Allen immediately led. Nothing could be more chilling than the dreary aspect of this; as far as the eye could extend on either side, nothing else soon became visible but its bleak, broken, sterile surface—not a trace or sign of inhabitation, but now and then a faint smoke that, but for the heap of mud-cemented stones it issued from, might have been mistaken for a vapour of the swamp.

As the day declined, it again became cold and misty, and the very water of the canal seemed to have contracted the black mournful tinge of the dismal soil through which it flowed. In a state of mind to be particularly influenced by external objects,

the heart of Fidelia again sunk within her: there was nothing now indeed to cheer her —the few passengers that had come on from ——— belonged to E——, and were now all taken up in talking with one another of those they were expecting to see, while Mr. and Mrs. Stovendale sat apart by themselves, each buried in melancholy thoughtfulness, except when now and then a tear, evidently not to be suppressed, stole down the languid cheek of Mrs. Stovendale, and engaging his notice, drew from him some kind attention, but which, far from having the desired effect, seemed rather to heighten than allay the feelings it was intended to sooth.

But for this dejection Fidelia thought she could in a degree account, when, on their landing, unlike the other passengers, she found there was no one to meet, no one to greet them—that, like herself, they appeared utterly isolated and unknown at the moment. She heard the deep sighs of Mrs. Stovendale as she listened to the joyous greetings between the other passen-

gers and those who had come to meet them; nor could she wonder at them, but too feelingly knowing, as she did from sad experience, what it was to have the horrors of a forlorn situation heightened by such an enforced contrast.

They were obliged to remain some time on the cold bank, with evening now fast glooming around them, till they could get some one to take charge of their luggage; they then set out for E——, which was distant about a mile from the place where they landed, and at the very farther extremity of which was the only inn it had to boast of, though by no means an inconsiderable place; but, like many others in the kingdom, it had suffered in this respect from the accommodation provided for passengers in the canal-boats, and the expeditious mode of travelling in the mail.

On reaching this, they turned into the first place that presented itself to their view on passing the threshold, and found themselves in the kitchen, where a little

shabby-looking girl starting from the fire at which she was squatted at their entrance, after surveying them a moment, bounded off to call the mistress.

The mistress soon appeared in the form of an elderly woman that, if Henry the Fourth was ever performed in the burlesque manner the Beggars' Opera sometimes is, might very well have personated the fat knight.

Mr. Stovendale eagerly inquired what accommodation she could give them?

"Faith, and the very best in the place," she replied.

"Psha! you may well promise that," he peevishly returned, "when this is the only inn. But tell me at once what it is, that I may know whether or not I must seek a lodging."

"Pho! pho! you wouldn't get so comfortable a lodging in the whole place, barring at Johnny Kite's—for I won't tell a lie; but being Quakers, they are mighty particular about strangers, and the wife makes such a piece of work about her house!

Sorrow lit of her, but she should put it in a glass case! for she won't let as much dust lie on the floor as a fly could kick up with his heel. But, to be sure, 'tis not the very best the Clonard Arms can afford that I can give you at present; for you must know I am keeping my daughter's wedding-day, and so our only sitting-room is taken up. Only for that, and that she mayn't have the luck of another, upon my conscience I'd turn them all out, man and boy, chick and child!—But there's two snug rooms up stairs, and if you'll be after coming here next summer, 'tis then you'll find I'll never be at a nonplus; for I have taken Kit Donovan's house next door, and when I stop up the rat-holes in the two upper rooms, and mend the joists of the ceiling, and plaster the walls, and new-sash the windows, and put locks to the doors, and stop up the crevices in them, the devil two snugger rooms there will be in all E——."

"My good woman, no more of your

legendary tales, I beg of you," said Mr. Stovendale, in more than his usually-peevish accent, " but shew us up stairs at once."

" Ah, then, where's that strap Biddy, to get a candle?" she cried, looking about her. " Isn't it a poor case that, whenever I want her, she's off like a shot against a barn-door?" and going to the back-door, she opened it, and began calling.

" Ah, then, what need you be bellowing after me, like a mad bull?" Biddy speedily replied; " a'n't I here letting the calf out of the pigstye, where mister Jack fastened him up? and isn't my heart broke with the pig eating up all the potatoes I was washing for supper? and, the sorrow take him! hasn't the gander been plucking the very hair of my head out by the roots while I have been opening the stye?"

She came running in, however; and the dishevelled state of her locks proved that, in some way or other, they certainly had been sadly disordered.

Simple as was the command of her mis-

tress, however, it was not easily accomplished: the bellows could not be found to blow the turf into a blaze, and when at length the puffing of Biddy effected a glimmer, there was no paper or stick at hand; so that by the time the candle was lighted it was half melted, and in this state was clapt into a large candlestick, where of course, leaning at one side, it dropt upon the stairs the whole way up, and spread a pool of grease upon the table where it was laid. But the attention of the guests was diverted from every thing else by the uncomfortable appearance of the room into which they were shewn; it was a two-bedded one, in the state in which it had been left from the morning, with a cold damp air blowing through it from two opposite windows, raised a little by a broken comb under each.

Growing still paler from rage than he had previously been from cold and fatigue, Mr. Stovendale demanded of their attendant whether she imagined they were any of the pigs master Jack had excluded from

their lodging below, that she had shewn them into such a pigstye above?

Biddy acknowledged it wasn't very nice, but, if his honour would be pleased to let her, she wouldn't be a giffy settling it, and actually approached one of the beds for the purpose.

This was past endurance, he said; and starting from a chair on which he had thrown himself, he motioned to Mrs. Stovendale, who had disconsolately sunk upon another, to follow.

Biddy, however, nimbly interposed between him and the door; there was another room, she said, if his honour would but look at it, which she was sure he would like, for it was nate and clean; but being smaller than this one, she had not first shewn him to it.

After a moment's hesitation, she was allowed to lead the way to it; and though it did not exactly correspond with the account she gave of it, still, being settled in some degree, and having a fireplace, which the other had not, it was considered better

to put up with it than seek accommodation elsewhere at such an hour.

Having again deposited the unfortunate candle, Biddy was whipping away to bring up some lighted turf, when Mr. Stovendale called her back, to point out the way in which she had left it.

"Och, I'll soon settle that," said Biddy; and jumping on a chair, she tore down a piece of paper which the damp had loosened from the wall, and wrapping it round, wiped away the grease that had dropt from it with the end of the window-curtain, and then ran off.

Mrs. Stovendale had here, as in the other room, again sunk upon a chair. Her husband's eyes were now directed towards her, and in a tone of deep reproach he asked whether she really meant to break his heart?

"What a question!" in a similar tone she answered. "Do you make no allowance for the feelings, the recollections that must be revived here? or do you really

think I am not to be moved by involuntary comparisons?"

"No, certainly not, madam; but when you know what I am suffering, I think you might have tried to restrain your feelings. But I have no right to reproach you," and snatching up his hat, he moved towards the door.

"For God's sake, what are you about? Surely you are not going out at this hour?" excessively alarmed she exclaimed.

"Why not? you must be more composed when I am not in your sight."

"Oh, this is cruel indeed!—Miss Hawthorn, prevent him."

Fidelia instantly placed herself against the door, by which she was sitting.—"Pray, dear sir," she said, "do not do any thing contrary to the wishes of Mrs. Stovendale; consider how much fatigued she has been, and then I am sure you cannot wonder at her appearing a little low."

Mr. Stovendale looked irresolutely at his wife (by this time she was weeping

violently)—he threw off his hat, and eagerly approaching her, kissed her wet cheek.—"Forgive me," he implored, "for having vexed you: but you know how ill I can bear the sight of your dejection, from the silent reproach it conveys to my heart."

"What you ask is readily granted," returned Mrs. Stovendale: "these tears will relieve the fulness of my heart, and in a little time I shall be myself again."

Biddy speedily reappeared, followed by her mistress, Mrs. Mullaghan, to know what they would like to have for dinner.

"Something very nice and delicate," Mrs. Stovendale, with forced cheerfulness, answered, anxious to get something that might tempt the sickly appetite of her husband.

"Faith, and it was she that should," Mrs. Mullaghan replied.—"But, arrah! Biddy, were there no moulds to be got, that you brought up this slurred candle? and, sorrow take you! couldn't you knock

the nail through the window that I put in it the other night to keep it from jig-jogging?"

"Musha! don't you know I couldn't find the hammer?" returned Biddy.

"Ah, then, the devil's luck to you! isn't here as good a hammer as any one need have?" pulling a staple out of the wall, and with it very adroitly fastening the window.

Mr. Stovendale now made an effort to shake off his air of discontent, but the manner in which they were served did not render that effort uniformly successful. One thing was under-done, another was over-done; the chickens were red, and the mutton was white; the tablecloth had evidently been used before; there were no salt-spoons; the glasses were smeared, and the knives and forks merely wiped—in short, nothing could exactly please; and Fidelia could not avoid seeing it was a great misfortune to be very fastidious, or not possess an accommodating temper.

Mrs. Stovendale affected to think his

complaints only meant to be laughed at —" So I will indulge you in them," she said, " as they will enable us to have an enlarged edition of the Miseries of Human Life—those minor ones that should only be laughed at."

" I don't know," said Mr. Stovendale; " I can't think finding yourself, after a fatiguing journey, in a dirty inn, with a bad dinner, so very minor a misery."

" 'Tis by comparison only we can estimate properly," returned Mrs. Stovendale: " after one of the large, well furnished, well stocked inns of England, I allow you, this must appear miserable enough; but then the very reverse, if compared with the wretched ones to be met with in Portugal and Spain, as well, indeed, as in many other parts of the Continent."

" Ay, this is fine reasoning."

" 'Tis very fair reasoning, I am sure; and it is by such arguments that little petty discontents are cured. I remember being made ashamed of extreme particularity, by reading an account of a disas-

trous shipwreck, in which several delicate females were for several days in an open boat, exposed to all the fury of the elements, with scarce any sustenance, and less chance of being finally saved."

Either the arguments of Mrs. Stovendale, or else that which we are assured maketh glad the heart of man, had an effect upon Mr. Stovendale, for, after taking a few glasses of really good wine (it being one of the boasts of Ireland, that but little of an adulterated kind is to be found in it), he appeared somewhat cheerful, and, by the conversation he encouraged, evinced a well cultivated mind, and one capable of shrewd and pertinent observations. Fidelia now found that Mrs. Stovendale was a native of Ireland, but that Mr. Stovendale, as he himself laughingly said, had not to boast of the same distinction; he appeared, however, well acquainted with the country, and his remarks, illustrated, as they frequently were, by traditional tales and anecdotes by Mrs. Stovendale, were highly entertaining to

Fidelia; but for what they came to E——, or whether to remain in it, did not once transpire.

When, at length, after having readily done all in her power to assist Biddy in rendering them comfortable for the night, she retired to the room provided for her, what food had she for meditation! Contrary to what she had at first conceived, from the residence in which her introduction to them took place, she could not avoid believing, from what she had recently witnessed, that her present protectors were in some kind or other of distress: the way in which they had travelled, their evident forlornness on arriving at E——, plainly testified this. That they should then have burthened themselves with a stranger was a circumstance she could no otherwise account for than by concluding some very powerful interest had been excited in their minds for her: if this were really the case, it should not be her fault, she decided, if it was not confirmed—so infinitely more interesting to her feelings

had they become, from the idea now entertained of their being unhappy. The confidence she could not avoid earnestly wishing for, perhaps they might yet repose; for perhaps they were only waiting to ascertain whether she was worthy of it, to bestow it. Whatever was the cause of their unhappiness, she was persuaded, from what she had witnessed, that it did not originate with Mrs. Stovendale; and thinking so, her admiration of the mild forbearance shewn to the petulant humours of her husband was considerably heightened.

The party met the next morning in the parlour immediately after breakfast, which was more comfortable than they expected. Mrs. Stovendale told Fidelia she must excuse being left for some time by herself, as Mr. Stovendale was going to his chamber to write letters, and she was going out on business.

Suppressing the wish she felt to be allowed to accompany her, Fidelia said she would contrive amusement for herself; and accordingly, as soon as she found

herself alone, she got Biddy to shew her to the garden, where she found Mrs. Mullaghan getting vegetables for the dinner. The moment she beheld Fidelia she suspended her work, being extremely anxious to find out who her dada and mamma were, as she called Mr. and Mrs. Stovendale.

Fidelia contrived to evade her inquiries without heightening her curiosity: in order, however, to prevent their renewal, she tried to change the subject, by addressing, in her turn, questions and remarks to her.

Beyond the garden, which very much resembled the field of the sluggard, and in which the domestic animals, namely the pigs and the poultry, were much in the habit of taking a promenade at the heels of their mistress, was an extensive tract of town lands, so beautifully diversified with trees and hedgerows as to resemble a fine park, and exhibiting altogether such a scene as Fidelia did not exactly expect to behold, from the illiberal

abuse she had heard bestowed on Ireland by the Bryerlys. This inadvertently escaping her, she was violently attacked by her companion, who protested it was a sin and a shame for people to go to traduce their own country, declaring, in her opinion, it was just the same thing as if they abused their father and mother.

Fidelia tried to excuse herself, and having brought her back a little into good-humour, proceeded to ask some particulars concerning the village she lived in, the neatness and quietude of which had struck her.

It was chiefly occupied by Quakers, Mrs. Mullaghan informed her (a people who, from their regularity, neatness, and the opulence they in general possess, never fail of benefiting any place they reside in), and belonged to the marquis of Clonard, the head of the ancient family of Winterfield, which, time out of mind, had owned extensive estates in that county: that belonging to the elder branch had continued unimpaired and unalienated, but that be-

longing to the younger had long ago passed into strange hands, after being divided and subdivided into large and small farms, that enriched all but the original proprietors. On a hill, at the further extremity of the village, stood, she said, the remains of the ancient castle of the family: it was hoped that the marquis would have rebuilt it; but chiefly residing in England, owing to his matrimonial connexions, he could not be prevailed on to do more than keep up a few apartments, which he sometimes occupied in the occasional visits he paid to the place.—" Ah, Miss, times are altered," she continued, " since the family lived here. I was but a little thing then, but I remember well what a fine sight it was to see the old lord, and his seven maiden sisters dressed in their rich silk *négligées* with their large hoops, and his brother the colonel, with his handsome sons, going to church of a Sunday! The moment we came out of chapel, we used to hurry to the churchyard to see them coming out. And it was then Christmas

was kept as it ought to be—open house at the Castle here, and at Abbeyland, the colonel's part of the family estate, and so called from a fine abbey that once stood on it. But as the old folks died, the young ones betook themselves to other places, and so by degrees the fine ould Castle fell to ruin, and the colonel's property went from one extravagant heir to another, till, sorrow lit of us! none know whom it rightly belongs to. Musha! it makes myself often melancholy, when I think of the time that is past, and hear the owls, as I sometimes pass the Castle, hooting and nestling in the fine grand chambers we used to think it such an honour to get a peep into. They say there's vast treasures buried about the ruin, but my lord has so thickly planted every spot about it, in order, as the walls decay, to mark the exact spot in which it stood, that there is no digging about it; and 'tis a certain fact, that, on Christmas eve, the ladies of the Castle walk all in grand procession, as they used to do; I know several that could take

their book oath they have seen them: and, to be sure, why not? 'tis enough to trouble the poor souls in their graves, to think of this fine place they were so proud of, being let to go all to ruin. But this comes of people settling in foreign parts, and deserting their own natural homes."

Enough had been said to interest Fidelia and awaken her curiosity; and, quite in a humour for a visit of the kind, she proposed an immediate walk to view the ancient pile of which they had been conversing. Mrs. Mullaghan excused herself from accompanying her (rather to her satisfaction than not, as she was more in a humour at present for indulging her own reflections than listening to those of another person), but gave her the requisite direction. She accordingly sallied forth, and turning round the inn, soon gained the entrance of the avenue running parallel with the village. Its noble breadth was distinctly marked by ungrubbed roots and stumps of trees, while here and there a solitary scion waved its now-leafless boughs

over a parent stem. It was saddening indeed to witness such desolation, Fidelia thought, nor could she wonder at its being particularly so to those yet able to remember the place in its pristine state, as to them this desolation must be heightened by all the force of contrast. Each extremity of the avenue was distinguished by massive piers, but from which the gates once attached to them had been long severed; the end she was now approaching terminated in a large grass-grown court, whence, turning through a gateway on the right, she found herself amidst a thick plantation of trees and shrubs, evidently, from the traces of walls amongst them, covering a space that had originally been occupied by part of the building itself. Through this she with difficulty made her way, so unequal was the ground, and so thickly were the trees united. At length she found herself in another court corresponding in size with the first she had entered, and where, on a steep ascent, stood all that now remained habitable of

the ancient pile, namely, two square towers united by a range of evidently dilapidated apartments. The embellishments of ivy, stone-crop, and lichens, were not wanting to give a picturesque effect to the ruin; the thistle literally shook here its beard—the moss whistled in the wind. From this ascent was an extensive view of the adjacent country: on one side there was little more than a view of the dreary tract through which she had so recently passed, but on every other it was cheerful, the farms in this direction being well cultivated and neatly enclosed, while the prospect was a little diversified by vestiges of the encircling chain of forts that had once commanded the passes of the bog, and by means of which, on any sudden extremity, the principal inhabitants were quickly summoned to the aid of each other.

While Fidelia was gazing about her, one of the tower-doors opened, and Mrs. Stovendale issued from it. Before she saw Fidelia she had advanced too far to recede, as else perhaps, from the sudden recoil she

gave on discovering her, she might have tried to do. Fidelia, fearful her finding her there might be imputed to another motive than the real one, hastened to account to her for the circumstance. Affectionately pressing her hand, she assured her the explanation was unnecessary; adding, that, on her return to the inn, she meant to inform her of her own visit to the place, as on the ensuing day they were to remove to it, and in consequence of which she had been there to see that the apartments were prepared; "for," with (Fidelia could not help thinking) affected carelessness, "having occasion to come here for a little while," she proceeded, "the marquis of Clonard obligingly offered us the accommodations he himself has in his occasional visits to the place."

In their way back to the inn, Mrs. Stovendale intimated that, for the present, she wished nothing mentioned there of their intended removal to the Castle.—Fidelia became still more perplexed by all she saw and heard, and the kind of

mysterious air that was imparted to every circumstance. She had not been a day or two, however, in her new abode, ere she was led to imagine, from different allusions and inadvertent expressions that escaped Mrs. Stovendale, that that lady was in some way or other connected with the illustrious family within the moulder-ing walls of whose dilapidated mansion she now lodged; nor was she mistaken—Mrs. Stovendale was the descendant of the younger branch, and, in right of her father, had become possessed of Abbey-land. Wilful extravagance on his part had a good deal involved it, but all might have been retrieved, had not unfortunate-ly her husband resembled him too much in the thoughtless part of his disposition, so that, at the last, she saw it completely wrested from him: in a word, her hus-band was the alternately erring and re-penting, the handsome and inconsiderate Grandison, that, years back, had wooed but too successfully the youthful heiress of Fitzossory. His name was originally

what it now was—a fortune bequeathed by a relative of the name of Grandison had occasioned its temporary change, for, in the course of a few years after becoming possessed of this property, the right of the donor to will it as he had done became litigated, and being finally set aside, with his enforced resignation of the estate, the name it had entailed upon him was also resigned.

CHAPTER VII.

" Virtuous and vicious ev'ry man must be,
Few in th' extreme, but all in a degree;
— — — —
'Tis but by parts we follow good or ill,
For, vice or virtue, self directs it still;
Each individual seeks a sev'ral goal,
But Heav'n's great view is one, and that the whole."

It has already been stated that the successor of lady Eva was worthy of becoming so: had her advice, her remonstrances and

representations been attended to, the ruin that at length involved her inconsiderate husband might have been prevented. But at first he had not resolution to struggle with habits of long indulgence, and when at length he began to make an effort for the purpose, the remorse and distraction that ensued from a retrospect of his follies drove him again to dissipation, as an antidote to thought. Year after year passed away in alternate resolves and relapses, and of course in alternate fluctuations of hope and despair on the part of Mrs. Stovendale, till at length, in one daring attempt to retrieve his shattered fortune, all that remained of it was lost. The dreadful frenzy of unavailing remorse ensued; and in the first paroxysm of this he would have avenged on himself the wrongs he had done to others, but for the unremitting attentions of his agonized wife: when at length again able to rise from the couch of despair and sickness, her anguish wrung from him a solemn promise to relinquish

the direful intention he had lately meditated. To reason him into any thing like a settled state of calmness was, however, impossible; nor could she wonder at this, when she thought of what his reflections must be. But, bitter as were the sufferings he had entailed on her, no reproach escaped her lips—she condemned in the severest manner his conduct, but still she could not bring herself to aggravate the misery it had occasioned him.

To get him out of the way of his creditors was absolutely necessary; and after a little deliberation she decided on their going over to Ireland, there to remain till a friend or two, to whom they confided their desperate situation, had ascertained whether any thing remained for their future support.

An intimation of this intention to her kinsman, the marquis of Clonard, obtained for her the offer of the old family residence at the Green he still retained, and of the apartments he occupied in the Castle at E——.

They landed in Dublin, but Mrs. Stovendale having a particular wish to see the widow of her deceased father, their departure for E—— was postponed for a little while. Fearful of being traced, Mr. Stovendale objected to remaining at lord Clonard's without her, and accordingly a lodging was taken for him at Mrs. Simpkins's, where the illness he suffered, and the privations he subjected himself to, contrary to his promise to his wife, occasioned that communication to Fidelia that so strongly interested her feelings for him.

But, embarrassed as she was, how, it may be demanded, could Mrs. Stovendale have possibly thought of encumbering herself with a stranger? In reply to this—An interest not to be resisted (as Fidelia herself, when musing on the circumstance, had surmised must be the case, as the only way in which she could account for its seeming strangeness) had been excited in her bosom for her; and besides, from the terror she experienced at the idea of some

returning burst of despair on the part of Mr. Stovendale, she eagerly, joyfully caught at the idea of having some one with her capable of sympathizing in her feelings, and assisting her in the arduous task of watching over the declining health of her husband, and soothing the anguish of his wounded spirit.

With heartfelt grief she witnessed the depredations that spirit was making upon his constitution; his faded countenance, his wasting form—all proclaimed that sorrow that whispers the o'erfraught heart, and bids it break. Oh, woe! oh, heavy woe to her, who still loved him with fond and unabated affection—who, in the midst of all his errors, all his wanderings, still saw a nature unwarped by selfishness, uncontaminated by real vice! But though, as a wife, she pitied and forbore reproach, as a mother this forbearance was often almost more than she could command. When she thought of her son, her beloved Hastings—the sad reverse his prospects must sustain—the destruction of his

youthful hopes—the suppression of all his glowing energies, his proud aspirings—with difficulty could she refrain from upbraiding the person who had occasioned all this: what, in these moments of aggravating reflection, could have prevented her, but the sunken features, the bending form of the culprit?

But Hastings, himself all that was noble, generous, and humane, would have been the first to deprecate this resentment for his injuries: unmoved he certainly could not contemplate them, but to raise his voice in reproach against his father was an idea he would have shrunk from.

As yet, he knew not the worst, though long had an apprehension of pending calamity weighed upon his spirits; he knew the thoughtless career of his father, the useless remonstrances of his mother, and the consequences of each he fearfully anticipated.

A military life had early been his choice, and from the university he entered the army. At this exact period he was at the

depôt in ———, whither the regiment in which he served, on its arrival in Ireland from foreign service, was immediately marched—just about the period of Fidelia's apparently sudden flight from the neighbourhood.

Through the selfish arts of lord Fitzossory, and the vile stratagems of his confident Walter, both Stovendale and Hastings had been led to imagine that colonel Grandison wished to acknowledge neither; keen indignation pervaded the bosoms of both father and son at the idea, mingled in that of the former with a degree of irascible resentment, in the latter with regret that he must look elsewhere than where nature suggested for a friend. Stovendale dwelt indeed with unqualified bitterness on the imagined unkindness of his eldest son, reflecting that, but for it, the excruciating sufferings he was now enduring might considerably have been lessened. But though want of the direst, most abject nature encompassed him, he resolved within his wrathful mind never

to make known his situation to him; still, that he might yet be made to groan in spirit for his conduct to him was his ardent wish.

About the period of Hastings's arrival at ———, arrived also in the neighbourhood the Beaumonts and their granddaughter. When once led to suspect, the slightest circumstance is liable to misconstruction: Mr. Beaumont had narrated the story of his daughter, and on being led to believe that colonel Grandison's request for a private audience was for the purpose of proposing for Albina, had taken out the narrative from the place where it was carefully deposited, in order to shew it to him, according to his original intention of submitting it to any one he thought likely to be her husband.

In the paroxysm of vexation that ensued on finding the visit of colonel Grandison was merely for the purpose of trying to discover whether, through his means, he could learn who Fidelia really was, he had flung away the papers in a manner

that scattered them about the room. Here, it may be recollected, they were found by Fidelia, on her repairing to it, previous to her packing up, to look for some work belonging to her which she had forgot there, and here also that, in the act of collecting them, she had been surprised by Mr. Beaumont, and bitterly accused of endeavouring to possess herself of family secrets.

In the justness of this accusation Mr. Beaumont became confirmed, when, some little time after, he learned from lady Castle Dermot, who thought it requisite to inform him, she was the acknowledged daughter of Mr. Dundonald; the explanatory letter that might have acquitted her in his opinion of this being owing to any contrivance of hers was kept back by Dundonald. Every thing considered, one circumstance compared with another, not a doubt remained on his mind of her having made herself mistress of the contents of the narrative, and perceiving there was an intimation in it of his de-

ciding against ever forcing Albina on her father, had been tempted to avail herself of the circumstance to decide on passing herself on him for her, and to effect which treacherous intent she had quitted, in the manner she did, the persons to whose care he had committed her.

Tamely to allow the usurpation of the rights of his grandchild was not to be thought of, and, exclusive of his natural wish to do her justice by their assertion, he earnestly wished to have an opportunity of punishing the perfidy and ingratitude of the supposed plotter against them. He instantly wrote a statement of the case to Mr. Dundonald, with an intimation of his intention of immediately following with his wife and grandchild, accompanied by such documents of her right to the title he now demanded for her as should affix an eternal stigma on his name, should he longer deny it to her.

Dundonald was infinitely disconcerted by this letter—an affair which he hoped

never to have had transpire he now saw likely to be blazoned forth: but of course he could decide on nothing relative to Fidelia till he saw those who were coming to bear witness against her. But he did not long remain in a state of suspensive doubt: the manner in which lord Castle Dermot contrived to get her to depart from Woodlands carried with it a conviction of her being justly accused, else why, if not conscious of a guilty imposition, and fearing to face those who were coming to confront her—why fly in this precipitate, this apparently-clandestine way?

Of course, this prepared such a reception for Mr. Beaumont as he had not expected. To enter into all the explanations that ensued would be superfluous; suffice it, the right of Albina to the title now claimed for her by her grandfather was established beyond a doubt, and she was accordingly introduced as his daughter.

As much as possible, however, to spare himself, he tried to have the recent error he had been led into concealed; so that,

except by the Castle Dermots, his son, and colonel Grandison, the exact truth respecting Fidelia was not known: her sudden disappearance, and the confused manner in which it was accounted for, excited strange surmises, but the curiosity it gave birth to remained unsatisfied.

The connexions he had hoped through her means to form, he was not without a hope of being still able to bring about through those of Albina. But the affection of lady Castle Dermot was not quite so transferable as he had flattered himself: a variety of circumstances had tended to attach her to Fidelia, and though with almost heartbreaking regret she was forced to consider her as no longer worthy of her regard, she could not bring herself immediately to admit another to that place which she had occupied in it. Superadded to this, was the prejudice conceived against Dundonald himself by the discovery that had taken place, in the elucidation of this strange affair, of his real character—a prejudice sufficiently strong to make her de-

cide on henceforth being on nothing more than merely cool terms of politeness with the family: to be allied to one, the immediate members of which she could not esteem, was a thing she could not bear to think of: she accordingly decided on acting in such a manner as should be likely to prevent an occurrence of the kind, by ceasing the friendly intercourse that had hitherto subsisted between her and the Dundonalds.

This was a most unfortunate circumstance for poor Albina, who in consequence had no one to give countenance or support to her in what might properly be termed her *debut* in life.

Dundonald on many accounts wished to get rid of the Beaumonts, and accordingly, ready in expedients, soon contrived a pretext for the purpose. Amongst his other speculations, he had speculated in the property of a bankrupt in Raheny; and pretending he wished the house fitted up against he should take Albina to town to have her introduced at the Castle, he

proposed to the Beaumonts their taking upon themselves the business, with an intimation that they might henceforth, if they pleased, make it their residence, as, though he decided on retaining it, he should never do more than occasionally occupy it.

Mrs. Beaumont was delighted at the idea of having such a residence; yet still she disliked the idea of leaving Albina, and foregoing the various gratifications enjoyed under the immediate roof with Dundonald. It was not to be avoided, however, for she could not even attempt to prevail on Mr. Beaumont not to comply with his wishes.

Accordingly, to the extreme grief and unwillingness of each party, they separated, but not before Dundonald had basely possessed himself of the means of their future support. In many of his recent speculations he had completely outwitted himself, and this, united to unbounded extravagance, an even princely style of entertaining, had so involved him,

that at this exact period he was even more rapidly descending the hill than he had ever ascended it. Like a drowning wretch, however, catching at every straw, he hoped, if he could but keep himself afloat a little longer, he might at length meet with something that would eventually enable him to extricate himself. The whole of Mr. Beaumont's little income was derived from personal property: of the knowledge of this he possessed himself, and pretending he was about making additions to his new-built town that must considerably add to his fortune, proposed to Mr. Beaumont his sinking his little capital with him for an annuity, as his plans were of a nature so extensive as to render him in need of all the ready-money he could raise. The terms he offered were liberal, and an idea of a deception not once occurring, Mr. Beaumont readily closed with his offer. To get him entirely out of the way, he then contrived to prevail with him and his wife to go to America, on a similar pretext to that of Raheny.

That shew and magnificence do not always confer happiness, poor Albina had soon reason to be convinced after their departure: hitherto accustomed to the kindest indulgence, to an undivided and unremitting attention to all her wants and wishes, she soon became melancholy and dejected, on finding herself but a very secondary object where she was. Fergus, not knowing, from what had lately happened, but what some second whirl might dispossess her of the place she now held, determined not to lavish those attentions on her which might eventually prove to be misapplied; and as to her father, he scarcely cared a straw about her, more especially when he found there was but little chance of her forwarding his plans with regard to his noble neighbours, all his efforts to establish her there on the same footing that Fidelia had been proving unsuccessful.

With the exception of now and then a public assembly or private ball, the parties in the neighbourhood were chiefly military

ones, especially her father's, who was quite a *bon vivant*, and detested (except when influenced by policy) the trouble, as he called it, of entertaining ladies; her home, therefore, though an almost constant scene of gaiety, was nevertheless a very solitary one for her, as on these occasions, which were frequent, Dundonald being scarcely ever without a convivial party of his own sex, she was excluded from company.

A thousand times she regretted the little snug tea-parties of Cooleamere, wondering how she had ever been tempted to despise what in reality had been pleasant. But her regrets she confined to her own heart; she knew what her beloved grandfather and mother would feel if they thought her not happy, and she conceived, besides, that she would yet be so. On rejoining her grandmother, she meant to make an effort for remaining with her, and in the mean time strove to solace herself with the idea, and prevent any displeasure from her father by concealing her discontent.

More than usually gracious, one morn-

ing Fergus invited her to take a ride with him: gladly she consented, and they accordingly set out; but, fearful perhaps of rendering her too elated by any further condescension, he rode on with her without giving her the least encouragement to converse—now humming a fashionable waltz, and now falling behind, for the purpose of questioning the groom respecting the merits of some fine racers in the neighbourhood, belonging to different gentlemen.

Piqued at this conduct, Albina regretted having come out with him; there was something so unkind, so unbrotherly in it, as made her heart swell with indignation.

She was carelessly riding on, when the sudden beat of a drum startled her horse, and ere she could recover firm hold of the rein, which was lying loose on his neck, he set off at a furious pace. The road into which he dashed was crossed by a gate; he was rapidly approaching this, evidently for the purpose of attempting to clear it, when an officer rushed through it, and at

the immediate risk of his life arrested the frighted animal.

Albina had instinctively kept her seat, but she was now unequal to any further effort. Fergus and the servant just came up in time to allow of her being saved by her deliverer from falling to the ground. Belonging to a regiment just arrived at the depôt, he was not known to Fergus; but Albina had no sooner recovered than Fergus, never unmindful of what politeness required, requested his address, that he might take an early opportunity of paying his compliments and repeating the acknowledgments due for the service he had rendered his sister.

Hastings (for it was he) made a suitable reply, and after walking a little way back with them, took his leave.

He must have been a very uninteresting kind of being who, as the hero of such an adventure, would not have made an impression on the mind of Albina: gifted as he was, then, by nature with all that could render him attractive and pre-

possessing, it is no wonder he should have made one on her not easily to be effaced. He was now in his two-and-twentieth year, tall and finely proportioned; strength and elegance were never more happily combined than in his figure, while to the most beautiful regularity his features united the finest expression, softened at times into pensiveness by the shade of thought that sometimes stole across his brow, and the fixed musing of his dark eye.

But not to allow Albina to incur the imputation of having a heart as transferable as bank stock, it is here necessary to observe, that, notwithstanding what may be previously imagined, her affections had never been colonel Grandison's; she admired him—to know him, indeed, and not do so, was impossible. In the attentions he paid her there was nothing to entangle her regard; on the contrary, a coldness and reserve that, by piqueing her pride, probably preserved her heart. Her grandmother, however, would not believe but what they were owing to the

motive most flattering to ascribe them to, and, contrary to the opinion of Albina herself, almost forced the belief upon her: in consequence, she could not avoid being shocked, when she found that the interview required by colonel Grandison was not for the purpose supposed—doubly shocked, when led to imagine the disappointment was owing to the treachery of the being she loved as a sister. In the very midst of her resentment and indignation, however, still clinging to her with fond affection, she wished to be allowed to hear her vindication of what she was accused, in person; this, however, neither her grandfather or grandmother would permit, aware of the effect the anticipated tears of Fidelia were likely to produce upon her; in vain she implored this indulgence—for the first time, her pleadings to those who had brought her up were in vain.

In the demanded detail of what had passed between him and Fidelia, Mr. Beaumont as much as possible softened

the particulars, trying to mitigate the grief she experienced for the loss of her beloved companion, by dwelling on the perfidy she had been guilty of towards her, and the precautions he had taken to prevent her incurring danger and inconvenience by being sent from them.

These arguments, however, were but little efficacious; at times she could not bring herself to believe her guilty of the perfidy ascribed to her, and whenever this was the case, her affliction for her loss broke out anew; but when at length compelled to believe she had treacherously usurped her birthright, she could no longer retain that regret; yet not without real affliction was she compelled to acknowledge to herself, that any longer to lament for her would be a proof of weakness deserving of the highest censure.

For the first time since her becoming an inmate of his roof, she began to wish the parties of her father were not so exclusively selfish as they had hitherto been; it was very unkind, she thought, always

to be making such as she could not be admitted to. How pleasant would diversified ones now and then be—occasional little dances and frequent assemblies in the town!

Her father, as if he had divined her wishes, informed her shortly after the incident, that he was about giving a very large evening party, in compliment to the recently-arrived regiment. The little heart of Albina fluttered with delight at this intimation: she had seen nothing of Hastings since her first encounter with him, but he had dwelt on her thoughts, and on this evening she fully made up her mind to a second meeting with him: something seemed to whisper to her a conviction of a sympathetic prepossession between them.

When at length the longed-for evening came, grandmamma herself, had she been by, must have acknowledged that she took pains enough with herself on this occasion, as she must also herself, had she been questioned on the subject, that she was per-

fectly satisfied with the image reflected to her by her mirror. Few lovelier ones could indeed be seen: her figure was light and graceful, her countenance innocent and animated; its contour was Grecian—a smile of fascination dimpled her glowing and exquisitely-turned cheek—sunny ringlets, of an ardent brown, played over it—while her large eyes, of heaven's own tint, received additional softness from the long dark lashes through which they sparkled.

But how entirely did the smiles and blushes of anticipated pleasure disappear, when in vain she found she looked for her deliverer!—no Stovendale made his appearance, and all was disappointment or vague conjecture in her bosom. Was he taken ill, or had he obtained leave of absence? She wished to ascertain; but she knew not where, or rather how, to make any particular inquiry.

Restless and low-spirited, she went the next morning to take a stroll through the grounds by herself. They were extremely beautiful, and open to all of respectability.

Various heights, covered with luxuriant woods, shrouded romantic dells and dingles, through which mountain-streams rushed with impetuous violence; wide-spreading lawns, bespread with flocks and herds, and displaying all the richness of cultivation, contrasted these, while a perpetual verdure was kept alive in the place by the thick plantations of arbutus, laurestinus, and myrtle, that overran the rocks and bases of the mountains. Amidst the dash of waters and these enchanting shades Albina loved to stray—her agitated mind was soothed by the indulgence; and to heighten the enjoyment they afforded, she sometimes brought a book to indulge with, as she slowly sauntered on. A new publication she had met with this morning she brought with her; gradually she became so interested by it as unconsciously to pause for the purpose of perusing it more attentively; her whole soul was absorbed in the subject, when, accidentally raising her eyes, she beheld Hastings at a little distance earnestly regarding her, as his arm

rested on the bough of a tree. She started and blushed, her emotion at this unexpected encounter heightened by the look which she had caught fixed upon her. He instantly joined her, and to his apology for having apparently startled her, she was replying with her characteristic good humour and sweetness, when suddenly the conviction afforded by his looks of his not having been prevented by indisposition from accepting the invitation of the preceding evening so piqued her pride, that with an instantaneous change of manner she drew back, and slightly bowing to him, turned away. Yet scarcely had she done so ere her heart reproached her—Was this kind, was this grateful, after the risk he had run on her account, to treat him with this coldness, this contempt, merely because her vanity was mortified by his not having eagerly sought to avail himself of the opportunity that was proffered of being in her company? There might be sufficient reasons for his

not choosing to do so; at all events, she had acted extremely wrong in allowing herself to be offended by the circumstance; and no doubt, if he had thought little of her before, he would now think less.

In her sudden but quickly-repented eagerness to leave him, she had turned into a steep intricate path, beset with briars and brambles; in these she soon got so entangled that she could neither advance nor retreat; in vain she extricated one part of her dress—while doing this, another got entangled, till at length, impatient and provoked, yet still thinking she deserved what she met with, she timidly glanced back, and perceived Hastings on the spot where she had left him.

"May I presume to offer my services?" he said, on their eyes again encountering; and without waiting for a reply, he hastily proceeded to her assistance. His efforts soon proved more successful than her own; and having succeeded in extricating her from the dilemma in which she had got herself, he was about taking leave, with

an air at once cold and constrained, when, anxious to atone for the past, and do away the offence it was so evident from his manner she had given him, she eagerly prevented him, by asking how he liked his new quarters, and whether he had ever before been in Ireland? The answers to these questions led to others, till at length they almost imperceptibly became engaged in an interesting conversation.

At length the first dinner-bell from her father's was heard.—" Bless me!" she exclaimed, unconscious of the inference that might be drawn from the acknowledgment, " I had no idea it was so late—had you, captain Stovendale?"

Hastings smiled, but checked the reply that was issuing from his heart, fearful of awakening a consciousness in her mind that might pain her.

" Well," she added, " we are just close to the house, and if you step in, I am sure my father and brother will be happy to see you."

Hastings thanked her for the kind assurance, but excused himself, under the pretext of having heard the drum giving notice of its being time to dress for the mess.

"Well, some other time," she said, "for you must be certain they'll always be glad to see a person to whom I am so much indebted; and though," a little reproachfully, "you did not like to come to our party last night, you will perhaps to our next?"

"Like!" repeated Hastings, with warmth —"Ah! if my not appearing there had only depended on that!"—Then suddenly checking himself, as if from sudden recollection, he bowed and departed.

Had it depended on that, he might indeed have said that he would have been there, the first of the foremost: but inclination and pride were at variance; he knew of the connexion between the Dundonalds and the Fitzossory family, and he could not therefore bear the idea of accepting attentions which he was persuaded

would not be shewn him, if it were exactly known who he was. Yet had he a hard struggle to decline them, charmed as he was with Albina; there was a sweetness, an innocence in her manner, that heightened the effect of her appearance, and were resistless to him, fond as he was of every thing that bore the stamp of nature. Yet what would have operated as an incentive to his acceptance of these attentions was perhaps another of the reasons he conceived that might be adduced for his declining them: uncertain as he now was of his future prospects, a presentiment of pending calamity had long weighed upon his mind; his mother could not altogether disguise the truth from him, aware that what is unexpected always gives the greatest shock, and in consequence he knew not the moment in which he might learn the final overthrow of every flattering expectation.

Thus situated, thus compelled to anticipate evil, what folly, what madness would there be, he conceived, in not avoiding

every thing that had a tendency to inspire him with an attachment! What more than either, what cruelty, in not resisting temptations he might find it impossible to resist, for entangling the affections of an innocent heart! for how could he find himself with her, how be allowed to converse, to pay her attention, without being tempted to forget the restrictions imposed by his situation? But, oh, with what bitterness did he think of these! Could he have brought himself to reproach his father, it would have been now, when, through his fatal misconduct, the present was all agony and agitation, the future all gloomy despair. Of quick advancement in his profession, destitute as he considered himself of the usual means of obtaining it, he saw not the slightest probability, nor, of course, any of ever being in a situation to enjoy that domestic happiness for which nature and early habits had given him such a taste.

With such warm affections, such social feelings as his, how dreary the idea of

wandering through life unattached and unconnected! How wounding, how corroding, when he reflected he had a brother capable, without attempting it, of reversing his situation! for from him he could receive obligations, he felt, that his proud soul shrunk from the thought of incurring from others. But he precluded his profiting by the tie between them, by shutting his heart against him, by disdaining the recognition of the mutual claims it gave them on each other. Surrounded by all the enjoyments of luxurious affluence, sailing on summer seas, moored beneath cloudless heavens, what thought had he ever taken about him?—what kind inquiry made how he bore up under the intimation of the cruel wreck with which all his youthful hopes were threatened?

These galling reflections were often rendered still more so by occasional traits he heard of Grandison, who was well known to many of the military then at the depôt, and whose recent visit to the neighbourhood had revived all their recollections of

him, as it seemed from these that he alone was the object of his real dislike and illiberality.

His growing melancholy failed not of exciting the observation of many of his brother-officers, and occasioned not a little raillery; they accused him of being smitten by some foreign charmer, and pretended to believe his dejection owing to his not having been able to elude the vigilance of her jealous father or watchful duenna.

His chief gratification was now derived from solitary rambles: the grounds of Mr. Dundonald being the most beautiful in the neighbourhood, it cannot be wondered at that he should prefer them, though, if all had been known, it certainly would have been considered more consistent with his resolution of shunning Albina had he avoided them, since there he was almost always sure of encountering her; and there was always some little service to render her on these occasions, or some question to answer, or some reproach to bear for still refusing her father's invitations, that

kept him by her side till absolutely reminded by the passing hours of the necessity of parting.

What she thus laughingly upbraided him about, Albina would perhaps at length have been seriously offended by, but that she found invitations to their parties were not the only ones he declined; he often indeed refused others, in order to prevent his refusals to Mr. Dundonald appearing particular. To the public assemblies, however, he could not resist going; and thus, between meeting her almost every morning and dancing with her almost every evening, poor Albina's heart soon became entangled in a net it vainly fluttered to extricate itself from. There was no one to impart its feelings to, or watch over her—no one to advise or counsel her against the effect of attentions which might have no real aim; there was nothing her father more ardently wished than to get rid of her, and, so she was honourably taken off his hands, he cared

little by whom, though assuredly a titled or wealthy suitor would have been preferred to all others, however contrary to her inclination.

CHAPTER VIII.

" Heav'n from all creatures hides the book of fate,
All but the page prescrib'd, their present state."

To render comfortable the temporary asylum she had procured for her husband, Mrs. Stovendale strained every nerve; sickness, she knew, had rendered him more fastidious than he might otherwise have been, and, forgetting all he had made her suffer, her exertions were unremitting to lessen what he had inflicted on himself.

In these, on every occasion, she was seconded with the most prompt alacrity and affectionate zeal by Fidelia; a fond and idolized daughter could not possibly have

entered more truly into their feelings and concerns than she did, well recompensed for any trouble or fatigue she might incur by finding her services gratefully received, and the pleasure derived from the conviction of being at length useful to some one, and of course an object of interest. She no longer felt herself the insulated being she had long done; indeed, we can never feel our situation utterly forlorn, as long as we have an opportunity of performing the reciprocal duties of society. All the talents she was mistress of were now, as occasion required, called forth; one hour she was busy in assisting Mrs. Stovendale in the domestic department—the next, she was gaily chatting with Mr. Stovendale, or singing and playing for him; for, as an old castle is nothing without a harp to be heard mournfully vibrating through its lonely chambers, Mrs. Stovendale, who perfectly knew what was proper and correct, had taken care to provide this proper appendage for it; in short, Mr. Stovendale was passionately fond of

music, and knowing its influence on a sensitive mind, she had borrowed a harp belonging to a natural sister of the marquis of Clonard, who had died in the neighbourhood.

But not all the fond attention evinced to his wants and wishes could prevent Mr. Stovendale at times from sinking into the most desponding fits of abstraction, or giving way to the most petulant ill-humour. On these occasions, particularly the former, from the terror then excited, the distress of his wife was inexpressible; and when she had subdued, by the dint of tears and soothing gentleness, his turbulent feelings, she had to struggle with her own—those bitter regrets, those indignant sensations, excited by the daily view of a place that, but for the most thoughtless extravagance, would still have remained to furnish them with all that was requisite for the enjoyment of life.

To find herself a stranger in the home of her ancestors—a solitary unregarded wanderer in the fields that had once owned

her for a mistress—an absolute outcast from the house where she was born, tenanted, as it now was, by absolute strangers—filled her with reflections of the cruellest nature. Yet what excited them she could not resist; the review of the well-remembered scenes of her youth, when every charm could please—when all was fair and flattering—when to her young imagination there was no cloud in the sky, no thorn on the rose: literally she wept over them, and still returned to weep, the associating ideas connected with them at once soothing and paining. Through all the haunts that had been her favourite ones, she led Fidelia; but though, before her, her bursting feelings often had vent, before her husband they were ever commanded; the shaft that rankled in his breast was sufficiently barbed, without her adding to its sharpness.

But to one family in the place had she made herself known—an old widow lady of the name of Grafton, and her daughter, a mild, pleasing young woman, and who

had her permission to mention her to her son, the village doctor, a man of some skill, and the happy husband and father of a very amiable woman and very fine family. The widowed mother, with her daughter, occupied a very small cottage at the extremity of the village nearest the Castle, but the doctor rented a very tolerable house in the centre of the town. The most cordial affection subsisted between every member of the family, and an air of contentment and happiness was visible in their humble abodes, truly gratifying to benevolence.

Mrs. Stovendale was early known to them; but to have known who she was connected with would have been sufficient, without any personal knowledge, to have obtained their respect, in such estimation was the family held she belonged to. Through their means she contrived to vary a little the dull monotonous life now led by Mr. Stovendale; she had them frequently to the Castle, and on these occasions there were always cards or

backgammon introduced, or something else that for the present moment had a happy effect on his spirits.

But they would not visit without being visited in return; and of a dark night, guiding the steps of the muffled-up Stovendale, leaning on the arm of his wife, to their respective houses with a lanthorn, Fidelia used to call herself their Will-o'-the-wisp.

The bustle and preparation attendant on these little parties seemed a pleasant variety to all, but to Mr. Stovendale in particular; yet when convinced by them how easily he might once have been gratified and rendered happy, with writhing anguish he thought of his imprudence. In domestic life, he now saw, real happiness could alone be enjoyed; all that was requisite to impart dignity and felicity to this he had possessed, but all had he thoughtlessly and madly squandered, to be the scoff of fools, the derision of the wise, and the dupe of the vicious. Had

the consequences of his fatal indiscretion been felt by himself alone, he might have borne them calmly; but when he reflected that others still dearer to him than himself were equally suffering by them, remorse at times almost amounted to frenzy. Gladly therefore he sought and encouraged whatever could beguile thought—the laugh, the jest, the tale.

Dr. Grafton was intelligent and well-informed, and his mother abounded in anecdotes and traditional stories, which a tincture of superstition in her disposition did not render less interesting—all indeed, however wild and romantic, she still held devoutly true. She saw omens and indications in every thing; there was nothing particular ever happened, that she did not find out that she had had some previous warning or announcement of it. Her dreams were regularly told—the dregs of a cup of coffee were never thrown out without first being regularly examined; nor could any thing have tempted her to

change a garment put on by mistake with the wrong side out, fearful of losing the good luck the circumstance augured.

Between her son and Mr. Stovendale politics were often the theme of conversation—those particularly that had reference to Ireland. The doctor was mild and unprejudiced—Mr. Stovendale neither; his public opinions were chiefly imbibed from a particular set in England, and he had besides, from the soreness of his mind, contracted a degree of petulance and acrimony, that made him often take a kind of malicious pleasure in contradicting, and expressing sentiments that, if put to the test, his actions would not have supported.

Finding Dr. Grafton inclined to speak with moderation of the unhappy disturbances that had taken place in Ireland, he spoke of them with a degree of violence he had never before done, protesting, so far from thinking the measures of government had in any instance been too severe, he thought they were in many too lenient; and that, for his part, had he been

an acting person and of influence, so far from shewing mercy, he would have exercised the utmost rigour of the law on such of the offenders as fell into his hands, in order to deter others from ever being seduced into similar measures.

"Well now, Mr. Stovendale," said old Mrs. Grafton, one evening, after hearing him express himself in this manner, "I should not have thought that you were so cruel. I am sure it's well for poor Terence Dullany that he quitted the Castle here before you came to it."

"Terence Dullany! pray who is he?"

"Did you never hear then? Why then I thought every one had heard of him, for he was greatly concerned in the rebellion, poor fellow."

"Poor fellow! Why then, my dear Mrs. Grafton, how can you express yourself in such a manner about such a villain as he must then have been?"

"Because I know it was not from choice but necessity he acted as he did; and sure, in the course of your life, Mr. Stovendale,

you must often have known of people compelled by unfortunate circumstances to act contrary to their real inclination?"

"My mother says what is very true," observed the doctor. "Terence Dullany belonged to a Catholic family, and, like many others of his brave countrymen, ere the modification of the penal laws had taken place, restricted from serving his king and country in the manner he wished, went abroad to offer his services to a foreign prince. On the revolution in France, in the army of which he had entered, he returned to his own country; panting to signalize himself in its defence, he offered his services to the government, with a sanguine hope of their being accepted, from the alteration that, during his absence from it, had taken place in the code I have just alluded to: but he was mistaken—unsupported by interest, his offers and applications were disdained and neglected; and when, disgusted and disappointed, he would have returned to the continent, he had not the means, owing

to the inhumanity and injustice of his connexions, who took advantage of his open and careless temper to dispossess him of his scanty portion of the paternal inheritance.

" Indignant and dejected, he for some time led a wandering life, indebted to casual hospitality for the supply of his wants, when he was surprised by the French in Castlerea. Well known to many of their leaders, a high command was immediately offered to him, but which he rejected with scorn, and hastening to the proper authorities, again pressed to be allowed to enlist under the banner of his king; but again was he repulsed with scorn, and in a paroxysm of resentment and despair, he joined the invaders of his country. Amongst those who were taken prisoners, with them he also was taken; of course, he expected no mercy, nor no mercy would have been shewn him; but, by some chance, previous to his trial his escape was effected. For a long time after he led a dangerous and

desultory life, at the head of a band of wandering insurgents, so impressed with a sense of his wrongs as to reject availing himself of the act of amnesty that was at last passed; at length, through an apprehension, perhaps, of treachery, he separated himself from all.

"The vigilance once exerted to take him may perhaps have a little relaxed, but still I believe, outlaw as he is considered, his apprehension would give pleasure. It has been confidently asserted that more than once he found shelter for himself in the Castle here, and that he still at times resorts to it; the numerous hiding-places with which it still abounds, united to the many secret partizans he has in the neighbourhood, render this altogether not improbable. Whether his principles are changed I cannot pretend to say, but as his name has not lately appeared coupled with any act of violence, I should hope his turbulent spirit was subdued."

"I'll try if I can't tame it for him," cried Mr. Stovendale. "I was getting careless about my pistols, but for the future I shall take care to keep them well primed and loaded. The villain!—But what an absurdity in lord Clonard not to have those lurking-places you allude to destroyed!"

"My dear sir, that would be next to impossible; they run in subterraneous outlets under the hill on which the Castle stands, such as no fortress of the kind was ever without in former times, in case of a surprise or defeat."

"But sure, sir," said Fidelia, in a suppliant tone, "if this unfortunate man came in your way, you would not molest him? Compassion is the only feeling I think he should excite, for in my mind he is a man more sinned against than sinning."

"Ay, this is very fine! As the hero of a romance, I perhaps might admire him; but by no means, I assure you, as an in-

mate. And pray, if he chanced to pay you a midnight visit, would you be much delighted?"

"Certainly not; but I certainly think not greatly terrified if I knew it was him, for of any premeditated act of violence I cannot, from what I have heard, think him capable."

"Well, perhaps not. You may deck him in what attributes you please—make a demon of him, if you choose; but woe be to him if he crosses my path!"

He said this with an air of stern determination that chilled the feelings of Fidelia; yet, with all the pity this excited, she certainly did not find her slumbers more tranquil for being given to understand such a character, when least thought of, might be under the same roof with her.

Nothing, however, occurred to excite alarm, nothing new at least, for still occasional fits of gloom on the part of Mr. Stovendale filled her and Mrs. Stovendale with the direst apprehensions.

Their kind neighbours were unremitting in their friendly attentions: through them many little matters requisite for comfort were provided, the apartments being but carelessly furnished, and chiefly with old articles belonging to the Castle, so that they still exhibited an appearance perfectly corresponding with its antique exterior. The only habitable parts were the two towers already mentioned; the intermediate apartments were all in too great a state of dilapidation to admit of occupation, though the grand tapestry-chamber that extended over the hall served as an occasional promenade for Mr. Stovendale, when the weather would not permit of his walking abroad. A double staircase led to this, and both off from adjoining galleries and the hall below were several rooms, many of which, according to the statement of Mrs. Stovendale, had not seen the light of day for years; for the weather was now too cold for exploring, as Mr. Stovendale called it,

old chambers, except assured of finding in them some of the hidden treasure it was said the Castle contained.

Among the many causes for agitation and regret Fidelia had, the least was not the ignorance in which she remained of the sentiments now entertained for her by Grandison; it was agony to think of having lost his esteem, and yet, every thing considered, it was but a rational and natural idea. In vain she tried to sooth herself by the consideration of this being of little consequence, from the great improbability there seemed of their meeting again; to have been able to cherish the thought of retaining his esteem would, she felt, have been a solace to her under any affliction. More than once had she meditated addressing lady Castle Dermot and Mr. Dundonald, to know what had occurred relative to her since her leaving the neighbourhood, but as often had she checked the impulse, from a fear of its exposing her to some new mortification,

and finally relinquished the idea, by the advice of Mrs. Stovendale.

Disinclined to immediate rest, from the weight she felt upon her spirits one night, she sat down to read, on retiring to her chamber; but the relief thus sought from thought was but of short duration, owing to the sudden extinction of her candle. But well did the silvery light emitted into the apartment by a full-orbed moon make amends for this. Soothed by the beauty of the scene without, Fidelia soon forgot her recent disappointment; with more pleasing light the beauteous planet "shadowy set off the face of things," while the clear blue vault was thickly studded with bright stars; all around was as tranquil as the aspect of nature—not a murmur was heard from the village—not a sound met the ear, save the long grass that begirt the ancient stone-work of the window, and the nestling of the owls on the battlements—"And to be able to enjoy with tranquillizing effect a scene like this, is the delightful boast and privilege

of innocence," said Fidelia. "Oh! who, with feelings that allow of such enjoyment, should consider themselves entirely unhappy? The gratifications of wealth, the comforts of independence, may never be mine; but Thou—oh, Thou, who by thy special providence and favour hast indeed manifested thyself to me, the Father of the fatherless, the Friend of the outcast, still preserve to me these feelings, and truly miserable I shall not consider myself!"

The silver light beamed far and wide, and as Fidelia continued to lean from the window to observe its effect upon different objects, she fancied she beheld something moving in the plantations that filled up one of the dilapidated courts of the Castle. Her attention becoming fixed, she soon found she was not mistaken. Slowly emerging from the ruins, a small procession gradually advanced, with downcast looks and folded arms. What the nature of it could be, who the persons that com-

posed it, or for what purpose, at such an hour, a thing of the kind could be formed, Fidelia could not possibly conceive, and with wonder almost, something more than curiosity mingled; yet would she have been displeased, perhaps, if accused of any thing like superstitious weakness at the moment. Be the feeling she experienced, however, what it might, certain strange stories assuredly occurred to her imagination at it, nor could she prevent a shudder when she saw them draw near the window where she was: slowly and silently, however, they passed on; and as they wound round the tower into the road, a soft low strain swelled upon the air, reminding her of the litanies chanted abroad in religious processions.

While involuntarily bending forward to watch their receding steps, a scream escaped her, on feeling her arm touched by some one behind her; nor will her fright at this excite surprise, when it is known that Mr. and Mrs. Stovendale slept in the other tower, to which there

was no access at night, but through the dreary dilapidated chambers already mentioned. On turning round, however, her emotion a little subsided on seeing Nelly, the servant-girl, who, except herself, was the only occupant of this part of the building, the other female domestic being so scared by some noise she had heard as to return home every night to sleep; and which circumstance, when mentioned to Fidelia, had reminded her of what Beattie says of the power of imagination over us —how apt our senses are to mislead us, and that, if we were in the habit of encountering the terrors that haunt the ignorant and credulous, we should finally overcome and banish them.

"Och then, Miss, jewel, I am sure it's yourself that must have been frightened to-night!" Nelly said; "and so, thinking so, I thought I'd just be after getting up to see; and to be sure myself had share of the fright, for I was dreaming of the ould ladies of the Castle when I heard the confraternity."

Inquiring, Fidelia learnt that there was a particular set of the Catholics who went under this denomination, and who, on particular occasions, especially the eve of any great festival, were wont to go in procession to chapel.—" It was poor Barney Molloy got such a fright by them," Nelly continued, " he wasn't himself for many a day after. It was on a Christmas eve, and he was going to hear mass at midnight, at the chapel at Abbeyland, when, just as he got hereabouts, he sees them coming out from amongst the ruins, just as you might to-night, Miss; and so, all of a sudden it comes into his head what he had heard of the ould ladies of the Castle walking, and down he sat, squeezing himself up against the wall; and he was so kilt with the fright, you wouldn't have given a farthing for his life, he says."

Fidelia could not help smiling at the idea of what she had experienced but a minute before on the occasion; perfectly recovered now, however, from her panic,

she quietly dismissed the communicative Nelly, to resume her repose.

CHAPTER IX.

"Nought but what wounds his virtue wounds his peace."

THE incidents of the preceding night, Fidelia had no doubt, would afford amusement at the breakfast-table the next morning: she was just beginning to recite them, when a letter was brought to Mr. Stovendale, which the man who delivered it said had been put into the post-office that morning. He hastily opened it, not without a little agitation on perceiving it directed in the hand of a stranger, having, as already mentioned, the most powerful reasons for wishing his present residence to remain unknown: but his agitation, though no longer from any personal consideration, was not lessened by its contents, which,

after silently glancing over, he read aloud, and were as follow :—

" *To* ——— *Stovendale, Esq.*

" If the present protectors of Fidelia Hawthorn feel for her that interest it is but natural they should for a young person thrown immediately upon their care and kindness, they cannot manifest it more truly than by preventing any further intercourse between her and a person who has traced her to E——, from the most insidious motives.

" Colonel Grandison is that unprincipled person; but it is to be hoped and presumed that, thus cautioned, thus forewarned of his execrable designs, Mr. and Mrs. Stovendale will defeat any attempt he may make to gain access to their young friend, for the purpose of winning her from the safe and honourable protection which they have so humanely afforded her.

" Efforts may be made to discover the writer of this, but, satisfied with having

performed an incumbent duty by giving the above caution, 'tis his determination to rest unknown by any other title than that of "ANONYMOUS."

Prejudiced in the strongest manner against his eldest son, from the arts that had been resorted to to estrange them from each other, Mr. Stovendale was well inclined to give ready credence to any allegation against him. From his own knowledge of the dissipations of life, the present one seemed but too deserving to him of belief; nothing indeed appeared more probable to him, than that a gay volatile young man of fashion should seek to possess himself, on the easiest terms, of so lovely a girl as Fidelia. But though perhaps he could not with truth have denied that he deemed this natural enough, he still determined that it should not be his fault if he succeeded in his base designs, so greatly interested had various circumstances tended to render him for Fidelia.

But, even though he had not been assured such were his designs, still would he have strained every nerve to defeat any attempt that might ultimately have been the means of introducing him into his presence. Led by the cruel artifices of lord Fitzossory to believe that he had never evinced the slightest wish to be known to him, but, on the contrary, thought of him with prejudice and dislike, resentment and indignation were the only feelings his bosom harboured for him; the slightest allusion to him never failed of throwing him into a fit of rage or sullen melancholy, and he plainly intimated to the astonished and agitated Fidelia, that nothing could possibly offend him more than his being admitted in any way near his residence.

Fidelia could only reply, that if he did intrude, it would not be owing to her; adding, she hoped and trusted that both he and Mrs. Stovendale did her the justice of believing that, after what she had just heard, it must be the most anxious wish

of her heart to shun him: yet, that he should be the unprincipled character he was represented, she owned was difficult for her to credit.

"Ay, no doubt—deceitful enough; and this is the way that half the girls that fall into the snares of libertines get entangled in them, by setting up their judgment in opposition to those who know better than they do the deceitfulness of appearances! —But I tell you," he added, with rising passion, personal resentment mingling with his anxiety for her—"I tell you that there can be no doubt of Grandison—of colonel Grandison being what he is described; for what credit for feeling or virtue can be given to the heart that is insensible to the nearest and dearest claims of nature? That cold, that selfish being, is this Grandison, that to you wore so fair a seeming; the pampered and voluptuous idol of fortune, no thought ever strayed after any that could not immediately contribute to his gratifications. You wonder at the keen asperity with which I speak:

but can I help it?—good God! can I help it?" rising, and pacing the room with an emotion that shook his very frame, and gave to his pallid cheek a bright hectic —" The connexions of colonel Grandison are known to me, and I know that he has nothing to offer in extenuation of his conduct to them. But the time will come, in which I must hope, must trust his heart will writhe with anguish for it; the compunctious visitings of nature may for a time be prevented or repelled, but only to have them renewed at another season with aggravated violence."

" How do I lament," said the wondering Fidelia, " being the cause of recalling a person to your recollection that appears so hateful to you!"

" Hateful!" repeated Mr. Stovendale, with something of stern fierceness, and dropping, exhausted by the violence he had given way to, into a chair—" yes, justly hateful. But let the subject drop. By proper caution you will avoid the risk of any disagreeable surprise; and if you

regard either yourself or the advice of those interested for you, you will be strictly on your guard."

Fidelia promised all that was required, and shortly retired to her chamber, too much perturbed not to wish to be alone. Oh! how would her heart have fluttered with joy at the announcement of Grandison's arrival at E——, but for the intimation that accompanied it! Had she then dwelt on his idea only to be thought of as a victim of seduction?—was it possible that he, the apparently-generous, feeling, disinterested Grandison, had formed such a plan, meditated such a scheme? But how could she doubt it, how discredit it, after what had passed, without having to accuse herself of weakness the most credulous—a weakness against which she had been cautioned by the voice of experienced judgment and deep anxiety?—The idea, then, it had been so soothing to her to dwell on, so delightful to her to cherish, she must henceforth strive to ba-

nish; pride, delicacy, virtue—all required that he should be expelled her thoughts.

In what way would he attempt to approach her? she wondered—But it was no matter, since against an attempt in any manner she determined to be on her guard; yet earnestly, fervently she trusted it might not be in person, from the heightened agitation she was convinced the circumstance would occasion—No, since no longer she could believe that illumined countenance the index of a noble mind, fervently she hoped she might never gaze upon it more. With such feelings as pervaded her bosom, she dreaded the encounter of that keen and penetrating eye: of what avail, perhaps, would the indignant scorn of her soul be, if the workings of her treacherous heart were discovered? Would he not too probably be emboldened by these to persevere? and to what might not this degrading perseverance be imputed by the only friends that now seemed left to her?

Ah! how did she weep the extinction of all those fond, flattering fancies, that, like illusive gleamings in a winter sky, had from time to time brightened the cheerless gloom of her melancholy prospects! She was remembered, it was true, she was assured, by him whom she had so much, so greatly admired and regarded; but how?—not to be sought after to give a proof of pure and disinterested love, but as the object of licentious pursuit.

But, in the midst of her anguish, how truly grateful did she feel for being thus timely apprised of the threatened danger —thus taught to see the necessity of combating with a passion injurious to her peace! Who the person was that had evinced so generous an interest about her as the caution just alluded to implied, she could not possibly imagine, unaided as she was, in any conjecture on the subject, by Mr. or Mrs. Stovendale.

On rejoining them previously to dinner, she beheld each apparently still much disturbed, and lamented to think that in

any way she had been the cause of agitation to them. To describe indeed the perturbation of Mr. Stovendale, on knowing that that son whom his heart had once yearned to behold, but now renounced with scorn—that son, at the recital of whose gallant actions abroad he had often felt the glow of paternal pride mounting to his cheek, till checked by the chilling reflection of his cold, his unnatural neglect, was in his neighbourhood, would be impossible. He knew he was ignorant of his change of name, and from the idea of making himself known to him he shrunk, unable to endure the thought of letting him or his haughty grandfather know the change effected in his circumstances; yet, should he intrude into his presence, he dreaded not being able to maintain that command over his feelings requisite to prevent this discovery, and accordingly was in a state of even feverish agitation lest some attempt to that effect should be made.

To behold him in such a state, and re-

main tranquil, was impossible for Mrs. Stovendale: besides, she was agitated on Fidelia's account; she knew how dangerous a pleader a prepossessed heart is, and she trembled to think of her peace at least being injured by the struggle excited in hers. In short, from being comparatively cheerful and tranquil, the whole of the little party at the Castle became restless and unhappy—every sound startled and agitated them; and in commenting, wondering, and watching, all that had hitherto tended to amuse and beguile the passing hours was suspended.

But, like many of his fellow-mortals, colonel Grandison was accused of what he was incapable of, glowing as was his heart with every noble, every manly feeling. A powerful interest, as already known, was early awakened in his bosom for Fidelia, but, in the first instance, chiefly owing to a supposition that made him believe she had every claim upon any service he could render her. He had not seen her above once or twice, however,

ere he began to feel that this secret acknowledgment was not requisite to make him anxious in the extreme about her—in short, he gradually became attached to her, nor sought to check his growing passion, convinced of its meeting with no obstacles from his grandfather, notwithstanding the disparity in their situations, could he satisfy him that she was the person he imagined, as, from various circumstances, he had not a doubt of being able to do.

But, in spite of the impelling ardour of his feelings, ere he gave way entirely to love, he wished to be assured that the object of his admiration was indeed every way worthy of his attachment, aware of his own fastidiousness with regard to the female character, and the ardent disinterested affection impassioned feelings like his would require. To be assured of what he wished, some little time for investigation was necessary; and while he sought opportunities for this, he also sought to establish her right to a name that could

not be heard by the earl without rendering him interested for its possessor. On the first head he shortly became perfectly satisfied—(but where, it may be asked, is the lover that ever saw any thing in his mistress but what was to be admired? so that, even though Fidelia had not been as amiable as in reality she was, there is still a probability that, to the enamoured imagination of the colonel, she would have appeared so)—but on the second, by no means so completely so as was necessary ere he avowed his wishes to his grandfather.

While labouring to obtain the proofs that should substantiate the truth of his conjecture, he was led to believe all further trouble on that account unnecessary, by her introduction to him as the daughter of Dundonald. His surprise at the circumstance could only be equalled by his disappointment; for while, by the name he fondly flattered himself he should have been able to have presented her to his grandfather, he was aware he should have

given her a title to his regard, by that of Dundonald he dreaded the reverse, that gentleman by no means standing high in the estimation of the earl. Thus seeing, as he feared, unexpected difficulties in the way of his wishes, he determined to try to guard against the abrupt revelation of them to their object, when the alarm excited, not merely by the report concerning her and lord Castle Dermot, but the strong anxiety he discovered both in the countess and Dundonald for the alliance, rendered him forgetful of this determination, and, almost ere he was aware of what he was about, nearly hurried him into an unequivocal declaration of his passion. What followed is already known.

What to think of this he knew not—whether to strong persuasion, to fear, or to latent inclination, was owing the consent she suffered to be wrung from her to become the wife of lord Castle Dermot; all he knew was, that, for the present, it made him miserable. When he had a

little recovered from the first emotions it excited, pride and prudence both impelled an immediate departure; he knew he was a bad hypocrite, and he could not bear the idea of having what he at present was suffering known. But what was his astonishment, his heightened agitation, when, ere he had well got back to Rock Fort, he received tidings of the renouncement of Fidelia by Dundonald as his daughter, and her precipitate flight from Woodlands, on the discovery of the imposition she had practised! To rest satisfied, without learning every particular concerning her, was impossible, and accordingly he posted back. The still-further information he received allowed not a lingering doubt to remain of her being guilty of the perfidy she was accused of; the evidence indeed against her was strong, and the step into which she had been betrayed by the baseness of lord Castle Dermot confirmed it. Again, from what he heard, Grandison was inclined to believe she was the person he had at first imagined; and thinking so,

though even blacker imputations rested on her, he could not think of abandoning her to her fate; the memory of another pleaded for her; and finally he decided on pursuing her, for the purpose, should he succeed, of revealing to her his motive for the interest he still retained for her, and conjuring her to let him secure her from any future temptation to error.

By indefatigable exertions he succeeded in tracing her, not only to Dublin, but to the house to which she had been brought, but without a suspicion relative to his lordship being excited, so artfully were the inquiries that enabled him to follow her so far answered. But in Dublin he was at a stand, no one being able to say whither she had gone on flying from her lodging, for quitting which in such a manner a different reason of course than the real one was assigned.

At length it occurred to him that she might perhaps have made use of a hackney-coach: the idea no sooner occurred, than he set his servant to work to inquire

amongst them, and who, in the course of a few days, succeeded in finding out the one that had taken her to Mrs. Simpkins's. Hither Grandison himself went, and from the communicative Betty, charmed with the liberal proofs he gave of readiness to recompense any information she gave him, was receiving the particulars he required, when Mrs. Simpkins overheard them, and immediately inviting him into her parlour, there gave him such a garbled statement of facts as led him to believe Fidelia all that was deceitful. But this was not all: after reciting all the slippery tricks she protested she had played her, and manifold attempts she had made to take her completely in, she averred her having gone off with a gentleman, at whose country residence she now concluded she was, as, a few days after, Betty, being at the canal-harbour at Porto Bello, saw her going off in the boat.

A faint dread of something of this kind had been one of the great incentives to Grandison's immediate and unceasing pur-

suit, knowing, as he did, the danger to which such a creature would be liable from the licentious. That he had not arrived in time to prevent this irremediable lapse sickened his very soul, and the agonizing pangs he felt convinced him but too truly that, whatever he might have wished, he had not yet succeeded in thinking of her with indifference—Indifference! —but that could never be—no, though every lingering hold upon his heart were lost, still, retaining the belief he did of her birth, she must ever, however lost to society and herself, be an object of interest to him.

But though too late to save her from ruin, to rescue her from further degradation might still be in his power; he would follow her for the purpose, reveal to her the name he conceived she had a right to, and try whether the awakened pride of noble lineage, aided by his remonstrances, would not succeed in recalling her to a sense of her error—an error for which, alas! she might be able to plead but too

many excuses—hopeless, houseless, she might have to urge—no refuge for her unsheltered form but a seducer's arms!—"Oh! why was I not near her," he cried, "when the fatal discovery was made that has thus driven her, for want of friendly interposition, to desperation! Unfortunate daughter of an unhappy house! the injured name you might have retrieved thus sinks, through your means, into oblivion, doubly stained!"

To the canal he hastened, and there at length also succeeded in discovering the boat by which she had gone. In his way back to the hotel where he lodged, for the purpose of setting off in a chaise directly for E——, he encountered Walter, just come up from Rock Fort, about some business of the earl's. Grandison was at the instant in that distracted state of mind that rendered it absolutely necessary to have some one to consult with; nothing therefore could possibly seem more opportune than this unexpected meeting with

Walter, in whom, as already stated, he was in the habit of reposing the greatest confidence. The curiosity, therefore, his wild and haggard looks excited in the mind of Walter was soon gratified, and he immediately proposed accompanying him in the journey he was about going, but not by any means from the motive he ascribed the proposal to, namely, that of thinking he might in some way or other be of use to him, but simply from the hope that he might in consequence learn something that might make against him when represented to the earl, Walter still having not only the turpitude to wish to injure him with his grandfather, but the folly to think, if he did, he should himself profit by the circumstance.

The agitated state in which Grandison found himself on his arrival at E—— made him delegate to his treacherous companion the inquiries he wished made: the result filled Walter himself with consternation, from his knowledge of Stovendale's change of name, or rather his quick-

ly ascertaining that the Stovendale he had such reasons for dreading Grandison to encounter was the very Stovendale that now occupied the Castle. On the resumption of his paternal name, Stovendale had written to acquaint the earl with the circumstance, but which letter, like every other received from him, never met the eye of Grandison, though shewn to Walter, whom indirectly he used as a spy upon the actions of his grandson, as far as they related to his father. Walter's own reasons for being faithful in this instance, or rather for wishing, on his own account, to prevent any intercourse between Grandison and his connexions in England, are already known, and the complicated artifices he had recourse to for suppressing any wish to that effect.

Should a meeting now take place between them, those artifices must infallibly be discovered; and the consequences that must ensue from such a discovery he shuddered to think of. But how was what he

dreaded to be prevented? He could think of no other method, knowing, as he did, the determination of Grandison to see Fidelia, than to try and hinder the doors of the Castle from being opened to him. Accordingly, after a little deliberation, he addressed the anonymous billet already given to Mr. Stovendale, not only trusting but believing, from what he previously knew of him and Mrs. Stovendale, and the extreme fondness and solicitude he ascertained they felt for Fidelia, that the caution it conveyed would occasion any effort of Grandison's to gain admission to their residence ineffectual. But this was not all: to do away all apprehension of what he dreaded, he decided on representing Fidelia in such a light as would, he trusted, prevent any further anxiety about her, and of course occasion the speedy departure of Grandison from E——. A feeling he could not subdue had rendered the latter silent with regard to the misrepresentations of Mrs. Simpkins respecting her, and in consequence

Walter believed he had nothing to do but to invent something to her prejudice, to make him utterly indifferent about her. He soon gleaned sufficient materials to found his tale of scandal on—in short, he positively averred, the marquis of Clonard, having seduced Fidelia, placed her in the Castle, with two convenient friends of his, till his return to England, whence he had lately come.

But though what he thus avowed was only a confirmation of what Grandison had previously heard from Mrs. Simpkins, still the shock it imparted to his feelings, the transports of rage and indignation it excited, were as great as if only now he had heard any thing to her prejudice. He knew not the marquis personally, but still was not ignorant of the many advantages he possessed, and trembled to think, from these, he might find it a more difficult matter than he had at first flattered himself, to rescue Fidelia from her present imagined degradation. But he resolved

no difficulty should deter him. When he learned, however, that the present residence of Fidelia was actually one belonging to the marquis, he gave up his intention of seeking an interview with her there; and in place of doing so, addressed a letter to her, explanatory of all his feelings, his intentions, and the motives that now actuated him with regard to her—in short, a letter that, had she perused it, would have given to Fidelia all that information relative to herself which she so anxiously required. But neither her own feelings of delicacy, led as she was to believe she should find it the conveyer of some insulting proposal, nor the deference she owed to the opinion of those she was with, would permit its perusal. With a hand rendered unsteady by the strong emotion that flushed her cheek to a deep crimson, she wrote the following lines in the envelope in which she returned it:—

"*To Colonel Grandison.*

"SIR,

"I should have returned the enclosed in the manner it merits, but that I feared silent contempt might not be sufficiently demonstrative of my feelings; I have therefore suffered myself to notice it in this way, for the express purpose of assuring you that it is my fixed resolve not to open one from you—that nothing shall prevail on me to receive a message or hold any further communication with you; and that, should you, after this explicit declaration, attempt further to persecute me, I shall deem your conduct as unworthy of your character as insulting to mine. "F. H."

The rage, the jealous pangs of Grandison, on the perusal of this, it would be impossible to describe—his grief and agony at the conclusion he drew from it, of her being reconciled to her present degrading situation, else why the haughty

insolence that breathed through every line?—her fixed determination to avoid him, aware, as he conceived she must be, of his having no other motive for now desiring any further communication with her than humane solicitude. But, spite of her haughty declaration, he would see, he would speak with her—he would prevent still further disgrace, if remonstrance and entreaty could prevail.

Unutterable was the disappointment of the alarmed Walter, on finding his fabrication against Fidelia had not the desired effect: in the dread and anger it excited, he fervently wished the Castle, with its inmates, was sunk deep from mortal view in the adjacent bog. Still, however, he tried to hope that the stratagem he had recourse to for the purpose would ultimately prevent what he apprehended.

To obtain the opportunity he wished, Grandison, muffled up so as to be in a degree disguised, began to keep watch about the Castle; two days passed away, however, without obtaining a glimpse of

her, but, on the third, he was more fortunate.

Mr. Stovendale having just finished the first volume of an interesting work ordered down from Dublin, desired Fidelia to get the other for him; but on her proceeding to the room where the books were kept, she could not find it, and it instantly occurred to her that Miss Grafton had taken it, whom, on her asking her, a few days before, for something entertaining to read to her mother, she had desired to choose for herself. The now-almost-habitually-peevish petulance of Mr. Stovendale made her unwilling he should know of this, and accordingly she decided on running over to Mrs. Grafton's for it, fearing to send either of the servants, lest they should make some mistake. From hearing no more of Grandison, she concluded the repulse he had met with had proved effectual—at all events, she conceived there was but little risk of encountering him in the few yards she had to

go; for fear of accidents, however, she determined to disguise herself as well as she could. Accordingly, on slipping out, she threw over her a large grey cloak she found hanging up in the hall. But this was ineffectual—her figure betrayed her; and just as she had got beyond the Castle, she beheld Grandison. She directly attempted to draw back, but he had cut off her retreat; and, to extricate herself from the dilemma in which she found herself, nothing was to be done but to take refuge in Mrs. Grafton's. Accordingly, eluding the effort he made to seize her arm, she sprang forward, and admitting herself, hastily closed the door against him.

The agitation into which the incident threw her, however, was not easily to be got the better of; pale, trembling, dismayed, she almost rushed into the parlour, where, literally sinking on a chair, some minutes elapsed ere she could well speak, or in any way account for an emotion so extraordinary. At length a little recovered from it, and finding they had

not got what she had come in quest of, she became extremely anxious to get back ere she was missed, lest unhappily some misconstruction might be put on her going out by herself: dreading a second encounter, however, she resolved to first try and assure herself that it was not to be apprehended, and accordingly kept a look-out from time to time at the window. At length perceiving no one, she thought she might venture. But Grandison was only out of sight; guessing what her peeping over the blind, almost every minute, was owing to, he resolved on keeping out of view till she again came forth: in consequence, she was near the Castle ere she again saw him. When she did, she again made an attempt to escape him; but he was now too rapid in his movements to permit her.—"No, no," he exclaimed, as he grasped her arm, "since to stratagem I must be indebted for a conference, I will not lose the opportunity that I have at length obtained, for the purpose——"

" Of insulting, of persecuting me!" cried the frightened and indignant Fidelia, bursting into tears.

" Insulting!—Ungrateful!" exclaimed Grandison, indignantly—" would to God you were as sacred from it from others as from me!"

" Why then see you here? why then molested and detained in this manner?—But you presume on a belief of my being unprotected, to treat me in this way. I have friends, however, that will interpose, that will interfere."

" By Heaven! there is no interference, no interposition that shall prevent my seeing, speaking, remonstrating with you.—But pardon a violence which you yourself have provoked," finding, with a look of increased alarm, her struggles to free herself from his grasp renewed—" Let me implore you to peruse this letter!" producing the one which she had so scornfully returned; " I am too distracted, too agitated at this moment to be able to re-

capitulate its contents, but its perusal will at least acquit me of intending to persecute you."

Fidelia hesitated: his voice subdued to entreaty, his wild impassioned looks giving such heightened, such dangerous effect to features even exquisitely beautiful, excited feelings she found it difficult to resist. —"Oh, why," she internally sighed, "why cannot we hate what we condemn? But if we could, where would be the test or struggles of virtue?—No, no," she cried, "I cannot, I must not take it;" and again she made an effort to break from him, but too conscious of the pleadings of her treacherous heart.

But her too evident irresolution only encouraged Grandison to persevere. His arm was thrown round her, and as he tried to force the letter on her, with difficulty could he forbear, with a mingled sensation of despair and fondness, from straining her to his breast. Oh, had she wished to deceive, how well, he thought, as he gazed upon her face, so pale, so

lovely—as he listened to her voice, so soft, so modulated—was she formed to do so!

At this moment of powerful emotion to both, Mrs. Stovendale appeared before them. The letter finished she was writing to Hastings on Fidelia's going out, she went in quest of her, and missing her, felt an uneasy sensation that induced her to seek still further for her. Indescribable was the confusion of Fidelia at being thus surprised; all that she had previously suffered from misconception and misconstruction recurred to her at the moment, and in agony at the idea of being again the victim of appearances, she burst from the relaxed hold of Grandison, and rushing forward, paused not till she found herself within her chamber. Hither she was speedily followed, and an explanation ensued, that in a degree calmed the agitated mind of Fidelia, by inspiring a hope that she had fully vindicated herself in the opinion of her protectress. Mrs. Stovendale certainly could not discredit her assertions; but though she acquitted her of premedi-

tated deception, she could not acquit her of imprudence, for having suffered herself to be detained a moment by such a character as Grandison was represented to be; and the involuntary expression of her sentiments on the subject filled Fidelia with grief and confusion. That she should have occasioned such strictures she could not sufficiently lament, and, as she reviewed the recent scene, wondered how she could have been tempted to listen for a moment to the insidious pleadings of a person she was taught to believe so perfidious: in the severity with which she animadverted on her conduct, she overlooked the extenuations she had to offer for it—the efforts she had made to shun and escape him. An additional cause of unhappiness, too, to her, was to find that still, notwithstanding all she had heard to his prejudice, her heart so acknowledged his influence, that she did not abhor, that she did not distrust him, as she was convinced she ought.

The day wore unpleasantly away: not one of the party seemed inclined to social

communion; Mr. Stovendale was more than usually splenetic and sullen—Mrs. Stovendale thoughtful and disturbed, from finding that Grandison still lingered in the neighbourhood—and Fidelia tormented by innumerable apprehensions, a thousand painful retrospects, and still more painful anticipations: to her involuntarily-misgiving mind a crisis in her fate seemed again approaching, a stormy sea again opening to her view, on which she was but too likely to be cast, without guide or compass. Glad was she when the hour for repose permitted her to retire from further observation; for, while she felt it impossible to struggle against the dejection that pervaded her soul, she felt it equally so to avoid thinking it led to injurious misconstructions in the mind of Mrs. Stovendale.

When the weather was bad, she generally passed through the tapestry-chamber that divided the towers to her apartment, but not else, its aspect was so dreary, and the winding stairs that led to it so steep

and broken. It rained this night, and accordingly, in order to avoid the wet, she proceeded this way to her chamber. As she was passing through it, she was surprised by seeing the folding-doors leading from it to the staircase lying open, as hitherto she had always known it to be Mr. Stovendale's especial care to see they were secured ere he went to rest. To what circumstance their having been opened at all this day was owing, she could not imagine, but of course concluding it was owing to forgetfulness their not having been now fastened, she laid down her candle for the purpose of bolting them. As she attempted to do so, she found her effort resisted without. Seized with sudden terror, she directly drew back, and was on the point of snatching up the candle in order to hasten back to the Stovendales, when a man rushed in, and seizing her in his arms, dragged her from the room ere she had power to utter a cry. By a violent struggle she then partly freed herself, and clinging to the banisters, shrieked

aloud. Spite of her cries and resistance, however, he succeeded in forcing her down the stairs, and was dragging her towards the door, when a strong light flashed upon them from one of the passages that branched off at either side of the hall, discovering, to the astonishment of Fidelia, as it fell upon his features, that it was Peckham who had thus acted the part of a ruffian, not having had the remotest idea of his having traced her.

This discovery, as may well be surmised, did not tend to lessen her terror: again she shrieked, and despairingly casting her eyes towards the light which had betrayed his hideous countenance to her, beheld a tall athletic-looking man rushing forward. Ere she had time to think whether he was an accomplice or not of Peckham's, the villain fled; and in joy at her now-apparent deliverance from him, she fell staggering against the banisters, unable to make an immediate effort to reascend the stairs. She was instantly joined by the person to whose appearance she was so much in-

debted, and who, in tones the most soothing, entreated her to compose herself, as she had nothing more to fear, bolting, as he spoke, the door by which the villain had escaped.

"Thank God! thank God!" fervently articulated the grateful but still trembling Fidelia, and then proceeded to express her sense of the obligation she conceived she owed him.

"I am afraid," he replied, in return to these acknowledgments, "that it will injure me for a minute in your opinion, when I tell you I require a requital for it. The requital, however, is simply that you would be silent with regard to me: your recent danger 'tis absolutely requisite to mention to your friends, lest any treachery has been practised against you, but 'tis not needful for them to know to what your rescue from it was owing—circumstances of the most unhappy nature render it necessary that no one should know any thing about me."

Fidelia started—the story of the unfor-

tunate Dullany, the proscribed and persecuted victim of prejudice and resentment, instantly rushed to her recollection, inducing an immediate belief that it was him she now saw; his wish for concealment, his look, his mien—all according with the idea she had formed of him—of a being saddened, not subdued by fate—convinced her it was him; and under the idea, with all the warmth and energy of a romantic and feeling mind, she vowed the inviolable secrecy he required.—"You need not fear me," she cried; "I know too well the necessity for the silence you require, to attempt to break it."

"Too well!" he repeated, with emotion, and a look of earnestness.

Fidelia felt embarrassed, and wished she had not gone so far, lest her allusion to his story should excite any additional alarm in his mind. She could not recede or retract, however; and accordingly, on his pressing for an explanation of her words, she candidly confessed the particulars she had heard, as she conceived, of him. While

giving it, she thought she saw a smile on his countenance; but to what this was owing of course she could not possibly conjecture.

When she ceased, he said—" Had I known how deeply your humanity was interested for me, I should not have demanded the promise you have given—or rather, let me say, ought to be; for it will doubtless add not a little to the agitation of the present moment to learn, that for your sake I have incurred the greatest risk."

Fidelia was on the point of reascending from the hall at this moment, but at this strange assertion she involuntarily paused, and looking at him with greater earnestness than she had before done, suddenly conceived she had seen him before—where, for a moment, she could not conjecture; the mysterious stranger she had encountered in the grounds at Woodlands, and through whose means it was, she had reason to believe, the intimation of her not being the daughter of Dundonald was re-

ceived, then occurred to her recollection, with a firm persuasion that it was him she now saw; and under which conviction she eagerly grasped his arm, imploring him to tell her by what means he had become interested in her fate, or obtained any information about her?

"The particulars you require," he replied, in evident agitation, "I cannot now give—neither time nor place will allow of it: but should you be able to contrive an opportunity for my conversing again with you in private, I shall endeavour to satisfy the natural anxiety you feel on the subject: and this, on many accounts, I must earnestly importune you to do. I have been delegated to inquire into your fate, to assure you of a safe and certain asylum, should adverse circumstances render you unwilling longer to remain in your native land: but I can disclose no further at present. Good-night now, and may the God who watches over the innocent, bless and watch over you, averting evil from your path and sorrow from your heart!"

Affected by this solemn benediction, amazed and wondering at what she heard, Fidelia allowed him to conduct her to the entrance of the tapestry-room without again speaking: but when she saw him on the point of leaving her, she eagerly stopt him, in order to consider how she should see him again; for to let him go, without deciding on this, she felt to be impossible, persuaded as she was, from all that had occurred, from all that had dropt from him, of his being acquainted with the secret of her birth. Yet, to contrive what was so absolutely essential to her she knew not, aware as she was of her actions being liable to constant observation, and the necessity there was for his remaining concealed from Mr. Stovendale, owing to the sentiments she had heard that gentleman avow with regard to him; for of his being the outlawed rebel, Dullany, she still had not a doubt. At length it occurred to her, that in that part of the building where she herself lodged they might be able to converse with safety;

and accordingly, after a little hesitation, she proposed his being at the tapestry-chamber the next morning at a particular hour.

For several minutes after they parted she continued fixed on the spot on which he left her—so confused, so bewildered was she by the recent incidents of the night—the strange, the unexpected manner in which she at length appeared likely to obtain the information she had so long sighed for respecting herself; at length a suddenly-reviving dread of danger perhaps still lurking near her made her hasten to alarm the Stovendales.

Their astonishment at what she related was indescribable. How Peckham had succeeded in tracing her, or gaining access to the Castle, they could not possibly conjecture; that treachery had been practised in some way or other, however, they were certain; and for the future, it was decided the Castle should be carefully examined before retiring for the night.

Never had Fidelia so anxiously watched

the dawn of any day as this, on which she hoped to obtain the particulars so interesting to her. As the hour approached for the expected conference, she repaired to the tapestry-chamber, and having bolted the door of communication between it and the tower, hastened to unfasten the one opening to the staircase. The supposed Dullany appeared at the moment, and entering, she cautiously led him to a small apartment near her bed-room, which, having the advantage of a fire-place, she used instead of that, for reading or writing in.

Both appeared extremely agitated; this was no time, however, for the indulgence of their respective feelings—situated as each was, every moment was precious to both; and accordingly the imagined Dullany hastened to satisfy the strong anxiety of his fair auditor. But before he touched upon the particulars immediately concerning her, it was requisite, he said, to preface them with a few respecting himself,

not only for the purpose of better explaining them, but also for that of obtaining the confidence from her it might be necessary for her to place in him. To these observations Fidelia, wondering more and more at what she heard, could only reply by a bow; and he thus began:—

"Little indeed is the pleasure my story, disastrous as it is, can afford, except a pleasure can be derived from sympathizing in the sorrows of others. On life's eventful scene my eyes opened in this country: the united houses from which I sprang once claimed its proudest distinctions; but grandeur and greatness, like the pageants of a day, had passed away from them ere my time, insomuch that two romantically-attached hearts were all that my father and mother brought to the altar. Every one said, that, situated as they were, it was madness for them to marry; and certainly nothing could be more imprudent: a lover of nineteen, however, is not very apt to let discretion guide him. On the point of embarking for his regi-

ment, he dreaded leaving his fair enslaver unsecured, conceiving, as I suppose every lover does, that the being he himself admired, every other person must also admire and covet.

" The war with America was drawing towards a conclusion about the time he obtained a commission, and in the last battle I believe he was killed. The dire intelligence, abruptly communicated to my mother, had a fatal effect—she survived but to give me birth, leaving me solely dependent on the care and charity of her old fosterfather, in whose humble abode her unfortunate husband had been compelled to leave her, from want of means to take her abroad with him, and being thrown off by every relative on either side, on account, as was pretended at least, of the displeasure incurred by their imprudent marriage.

" Of the strong affection that subsists in Ireland between the fosterparents and the fosterchild, you doubtless have not

only heard, but have yourself had experience of. Of this poor Dermid was perhaps as strong an instance as was ever known: though, thrown helpless and destitute upon him, I must, situated as he was, his wife being dead, have been no little trouble to him, it would have been impossible for the most doting parent to have lavished more care or tenderness on me, or for any one to have decided whether I or his own child were dearest to him.

"I grew up a happy little wretch, wild and frolicsome as the kids I fearlessly chased barefooted on the rocky ridges that surrounded my home, and had just completed my sixth year, when one Sunday (on which day, being always well washed and combed to accompany my fosterfather, and little fostersister Caty, to chapel, I appeared to greater advantage than on others) a shower of rain drove a lady and gentleman, of the name of Winterfield, into our cabin for shelter. My chubby looks and quaint answers soon attracted their notice,

and the inquiries they made did not tend to lessen the interest I had inspired. When they learned from the communicative and delighted Dermid, flattered by the notice they took of me, that I was the lineal descendant of one of the noblest families in the country, and that, if I had any one to assert my right, I must still be possessed of a considerable part of their property, the last heir, a great-uncle, having no right whatever to dispose of it as he had done, the attention previously bestowed on me was redoubled, and an idea gradually conceived, which finally was carried into effect. But here it is necessary to give a few particulars of them.

"Mr. Winterfield, though at this period a man of considerable property and consequence in the neighbourhood, was of low origin, and originally in very inferior and obscure circumstances; but, through a variety of fortuitous events, but chiefly being appointed agent to a nobleman of immense estates and considerable influence in the neighbourhood, had gradually risen in life.

His rise inspired him with an ambition for general celebrity, to obtain which, he by degrees set up for a man of taste, judgment, and general knowledge—an admirer of polite literature, a lover of the sciences, and a patronizer of the fine arts.

"His lady, who, no more than himself, had much to boast of on the score of family consequence, united with him in this ambition, but without having by any means pretensions as well founded as his to what they aimed at; but, as the most superficial are ever the most arrogant, she supported hers in a manner that, while his were not only often tolerated but allowed, rendered hers not unfrequently the subject of ridicule. But, in the midst of all the enjoyments that fortune could bestow, they still pined from one ungratified wish, namely, that for a child to inherit their large property; in particular, this disappointment was felt by Mrs. Winterfield, from a dread, in consequence of it, of the increasing influence of Mr. Winterfield's numerous connexions, of whom she

entertained all that jealousy a narrow mind inspires. As long as hopes of a family were entertained, she succeeded in keeping them at a distance; but as these hopes vanished, they again began to collect about him. In extreme alarm at this, she was trying to devise some plan for their complete banishment when she saw me, and from the immediate fancy Mr. Winterfield seemed to take to me, and the passionate fondness she knew he entertained for children, it struck her that my introduction into the family might probably effect what she wished; in short, at her suggestion I was adopted.

"But not entirely from the motives she ascribed it to was Mr. Winterfield's ready acquiescence in her plan: in the first place, the adoption of a child, connected as I was, could not fail, he conceived, of adding to the general celebrity he coveted; and, in the next place, Dermid had hinted his having in his possession certain papers, entrusted to his care by my deceased father, proving the entail of the family pro-

perty, and that consequently no legal title could be made out for any purchaser; and which papers Mr. Winterfield doubted not he should be able to obtain by adopting me, and thus the means of perhaps recovering for himself a property the possession of which would entitle him to rank with the most distinguished in the province.

"But not without the greatest difficulty, nor till the priest had been obliged to use his influence with him, could Dermid be prevailed on to give me up, so rooted in his heart was the love he bore me: when at length induced to do so, nothing could equal his grief; he hugged me, cried over me, invoked every saint he had ever counted a bead to to bless and protect me; and finally concluded by praying God only to prosper my protectors as they should be good to me, and fulfil the promise they had made of bringing me up in a manner worthy of my birth.

"Delighted at furnishing a new theme for conversation, Mrs. Winterfield made

quite an exhibition of me; no matter what company, what party—I was regularly brought in to display myself in my bare feet, speak Irish, dance the steps I had picked up at the fairs and patterns, and, by the inquiries I led to, furnish her with new opportunities for obtaining praise and admiration.

"When once my story became generally known, but not till then, she made an alteration in my dress, lest otherwise the curiosity that afforded her such opportunities of speaking of herself should not be gratified.

"What she had foreseen came to pass: Mr. Winterfield soon became so attached to me as to forget his wish for a renewal of the long-relinquished intercourse with his family; and in proportion as his fondness increased, she became more ridiculous about me. But no indulgence could wean me from the fosterer of my infancy, or its loving companion, little Caty: whenever I could effect my escape, it was to their

cabin I ran; whence recourse was often obliged to be had to violence to drag me back from sharing their dinner of potatoes and buttermilk, though, I knew, to one of every dainty. But I am not to give you to understand by this that I disliked or disdained the luxuries afforded by my new situation, or that unbounded indulgence had no due effect upon me; gradually I lost my cabin shyness, and became perhaps as audaciously impudent as any pampered pet whatever.

"But it was not the force of early habit, or that clinging attachment which the infantine heart feels for those whom it has first known, that drew me so often to the cabin of Dermid: as reason expanded, my family history became our constant theme of conversation, inspiring me with a delight that made me feel as if I could never be weary of the subject—rapturous was it to a young and glowing soul to learn it was the descendant of a brave, a noble, and a generous race, entitled by birth to form the loftiest pretensions. Yet not un-

mingled was the sensation with which the converse of Dermid inspired me: while it aroused a pride that made me shrink from every thing that was ignoble, and fire at the idea of the slightest indignity, it also excited a species of melancholy, that made me feel a soothing indulgence in roaming by myself through the decaying fastnesses of my ancestors, where, in place of the voice of mirth and music, the winds of heaven were now alone heard raving.

"After literally being allowed to run wild for some time, masters were appointed, and the same advantages given to me as if I had been the son of Mr. Winterfield. But happy as I should have considered myself, the restrictions imposed upon me, through the capricious fancies of Mrs. Winterfield, rendered me very much the reverse. She had adopted me entirely to please herself, and quite forgot that I had any fancies or feelings of my own; and at length, wearied, disgusted, and indignant at being debarred of the pastimes and so-

ciety suited to my sex and period of life, I suddenly decamped, for the purpose of going out a volunteer with a regiment then under orders for foreign service in a neighbouring town.

" Mrs. Winterfield was all distraction and dismay when apprised of the circumstance, conceiving that I alone prevented the dreaded readmission of Mr. Winterfield's connexions to the house, and accordingly lost no time in following to bring me back. This, however, she found a much more difficult matter than she had imagined: a military life was my bent, and I was induced to persevere in it, from finding in the commanding officer to whom I offered my services a friend of my deceased father, who, from the regard he bore his memory, promised to take me under his immediate protection. But the tears, the prayers, above all, the gratitude I could not but conceive I owed her, allowed Mrs. Winterfield to succeed, and in triumph I was brought back.

" From what had now occurred I could

not but conclude my destiny fixed—that Mr. Winterfield had decided on considering me in every way as his son, and accordingly resolved henceforth on acting with that deference to his and Mrs. Winterfield's wishes which the supposition demanded. The manner in which I was now indulged tended to confirm this flattering idea: the restrictions that had been so irksome were removed—I was allowed to follow my own pursuits, and have a kind of establishment of my own. Such indulgence, it may be supposed, had an intoxicating effect—not always, however—there was a counterpoise to it, in the saddening impression made on my mind by the melancholy reverse in the family from which I sprang. From mirth and splendour still I often stole to wander over the extensive tracts they once owned, and meditate amidst their desolate halls: but the lowering of the spring only occasioned its elastic rebound—like a summer cloud that veils but for an instant the glorious brightness of the summer sky, melancholy va-

nishes from the youthful mind. But these days of luxurious prosperity speedily drew towards a close.

" I was about eighteen, when an officer of rank, and of the same name as my protectors, became quartered in the neighbourhood, with whom, from the consequence of which he was considered, Mr. and Mrs. Winterfield chose to claim affinity; though how it could have been proved would have been rather puzzling, his family being really of hereditary rank, while theirs had not even respectability to boast of. He readily, however, allowed it, aware of the advantages likely to accrue from doing so, from the particulars he learned respecting them; nor had he miscalculated—their house, their time, their servants, soon became entirely at his command; the more he seemed to assume, the more delighted they were, from a persuasion that nothing was more likely to confirm the belief they wished entertained.

" Colonel Winterfield was a widower,

and had not long been their intimate when he spoke of a daughter he had, and the happiness he should experience if he could have the good fortune to repair the loss she had sustained in her mother, by finding such a person as Mrs. Winterfield to watch over and direct her. Mrs. Winterfield took the hint, but too much flattered to be deemed equal to such a task by such a person as the colonel. She had never regarded me but as an instrument to forward her own selfish views, and now, without the slightest compunction or regret, thought of displacing me, by the introduction of a new favourite; for so well did she know the disposition of Mr. Winterfield, as to feel almost convinced this would be the case, by the introduction of Miss Winterfield into the family, gratified as his pride would be by her being committed to their care. In short, she was sent for, and became an established inmate in the house.

"In the opening morning of life, both from her age and appearance, she was cal-

culated to inspire the liveliest interest; such I felt for her, and such I evinced on every occasion, delighting in aiding to expand and cultivate so amiable a mind. But in proportion as she advanced in the favour of my protectors, I soon perceived I declined in it. A dread of being accused of selfishness and sordid jealousy withheld me for a time from uttering an observation on the subject; but when, at length, to chilling coldness, to a look of supercilious indifference, I found insult added, the fostering smile of kindness utterly withdrawn, I could no longer control the feelings excited by the alteration—grief, resentment, indignation—all impelled me to speak. My remonstrances occasioned reproaches; I was accused of ingratitude and presumption—presumption in entertaining hopes, the disappointment of which, it was asserted, had occasioned the irritation I had given way to. Mr. Winterfield said, long ere this he had hoped I would exchange the idle loitering life I led for an active one, such as would re-

lieve him from the unpleasant burthen I had long been to him; but, since I had not voluntarily done so, he now felt it incumbent on him to tell me I must, having, in doing what he had already done for me, done more than he had originally intended.

"Eagerly I assured him I concurred in opinion with him, yet at the same time begged to observe, that it was not in pursuance of my own inclination, but what I conceived to be his wishes and Mrs. Winterfield's, that I had led what he so justly termed a life of indolence; and that I was not only ready, but anxious to enter the army immediately, if he would enable me to do so in a manner becoming my birth.

"Repeating the expression with a laugh of scorn, he bade me recollect the place whence he had taken me, and whether it would be consistent for a cabin-foundling to associate or be placed on a level with men of family; adding, the ranks, in which was my proper station, were open to me.

"God of Heaven! what were my feel-

ings at that moment—how did all I knew of my family rush to my recollection, to fire me with indignation!—how did the blood which he had insulted mount to my cheek, and boil in every vein! Fiercely I asserted my hereditary right to maintain a much prouder rank in society than that to which I had been elevated by him; demanded, as a right, the realization of those expectations, at least in a degree, which he had so evidently wished to inspire; reminded him of the voluntary effort I had myself made for independence —of the noble, the generous friend I might at that moment have possessed but for the interference of Mrs. Winterfield; and bitterly upbraided his barbarity for dragging me from obscurity but to render me the plaything of a moment, the victim of caprice and selfishness. But in vain I appealed to his feelings, in vain to his sense of justice and integrity; and in the bitter anguish of my soul I at length fled his house, though without actually knowing at the moment whither to turn.

" But it so happened that I had contracted an intimacy with a young man of rank and fortune in the neighbourhood: what had occurred between me and Mr. Winterfield soon spread, and he immediately sought me out, to entreat I would accompany him on a tour he was about taking on the Continent, of as extended a nature as its distracted state would permit. Ill health and family misfortunes had alike driven him to travel, so that, instead of posting about, he often stopped for a considerable period at different places. Some years therefore passed in this way, when he died, and by his death gave me reason to think myself again forlorn, his property being entailed in such a manner as to deprive him of the power of making the slightest provision for me. When a little recovered from the dreadful effect his death had upon me, I was on the point of joining the British forces in Portugal as a volunteer, when a letter recalled me to Ireland.

" At a very early period I had become

acquainted with the family of lord Mountrath, who from his inland seat in the county came frequently to pass a summer at the sea-side, in the vicinity of Mr. Winterfield's residence. His family consisted of his lady and two daughters, the eldest of whom was married, shortly after my introduction to them, to a nobleman of elevated rank—the other, the lovely Julia, allowed herself to look with complacency on the attentions which my sighing heart early and involuntarily paid her. My birth known to her father, and my expectations of being heir to the considerable property of Mr. Winterfield regarded as certain, no disapprobation was evinced by him to these, and gradually prospects of bliss and happiness opened to my view, surpassing what I had once thought I could ever hope for. But, alas! clouds and darkness were destined shortly to overshadow these.

"Lord Mountrath was a man of the most selfish and tyrannical disposition, and no sooner was it evident that Mr.

Winterfield's sentiments and intentions were altered with regard to me, than an immediate change took place in his conduct, accompanied with a strict injunction to his daughter to think no more of me. But her sentiments were not quite so pliant as his; she could neither recall the affections he had sanctioned her bestowing, nor yet bring herself to cancel the vows he had allowed her to make. But, convinced that to appeal to his feelings would be useless, she contented herself for the present with merely repeating to me her assurances of inviolable attachment.

"With this assurance I departed with my friend for the Continent—not, however, before a mode of correspondence had been settled between us; for neither to see her or hear from her was more than I could bear to think of. But, notwithstanding the hope I strove to cherish, when by the death of my friend compelled to take a review of my situation, so desperate did it appear to me, that, in

despair, I was on the point of renouncing my native country for ever, and conjuring her to forget me, as a wretch to whom it would be destruction to unite her fate, when a letter arrived from her, imploring me to hasten back, if I wished to save her from a hated marriage; adding, that though her father would not permit our union, she could scarcely doubt his not forgiving it, more especially if there was any truth in the report that had lately become prevalent in the country, of certain papers being still in existence, which, if acted upon, would enable me to recover a considerable part of my family inheritance.

"That there were such I well knew, from the testimony of Dermid, who, as soon as I could be made sensible of their importance, acquainted me of them, and of his having resigned them into the hands of Mr. Winterfield on my account. Again elated by expectation, from the intimation thus received that there was still something to hope for, I lost no time in

obeying the wishes of my beloved, and hastening back with all possible expedition, sought an interview with her immediately on my landing, and, ere the lapse of many more hours, found myself her husband. Pride and generosity certainly urged me in the strongest manner against appearing to take any advantage of her tenderness; but the dread of losing her, of seeing her forced into the arms of another (as seemed but too likely, if it were not ascertained that she had taken refuge in mine), conquered every other feeling, and rendered vain the remonstrances of prudence.

"The next step after my marriage was to make an application to Mr. Winterfield for the restoration of the papers so important to me. I waited on him for the purpose, but, good God! what was my consternation to hear him positively deny ever having had such in his possession! 'Tis true, his faltering voice, his changing colour, his look of guilty confusion, plainly

demonstrated the assertion a falsehood: but of what avail was this conviction to me, unable as I was to prove it, poor Dermid, in the innocence and simplicity of his heart, having given up these important documents without any acknowledgment? Vain were my entreaties, my reproaches, my remonstrances—he persevered in his cruel perfidiousness. This perseverance decided lord Mountrath: he hesitated noticing his daughter's application for forgiveness, till he had learned the result of this application to Mr. Winterfield; the moment it was known, his avarice equal to his ambition, he utterly renounced her, with a peremptory interdiction of all further intercourse between her and her family.

"Transient, therefore, was the bliss occasioned by our union: the anguish inflicted by this cruel disappointment of our hopes of forgiveness and independence may easier be conceived than described—the anguish, the maddening anguish I

endured at the idea of what I saw it was but too probable she would suffer through my means.

"Long, however, is it before hope entirely dies within the youthful breast. By delusive expectations, and now and then faintly-reviving hopes of forgiveness, we struggled on for some time through daily-increasing scenes of wretchedness, aggravated by the luxurious indulgences to which both had hitherto been accustomed; at length the confinement of my beloved compelled me to the humiliating alternative of either making known those wants we had hitherto tried to conceal, or else of incurring the risk of her life.

"Accordingly once more, through the medium of her sorrowing mother, the manacled and pining victim of domestic tyranny, I made an appeal to the feelings of lord Mountrath, avowing my readiness, if on no other condition he would extend his pity and forgiveness to his daughter, to exile myself from her, on her recovery,

to some distant land. But, though the application was backed by all the eloquence of nature, though at his feet the weeping lady Mountrath implored him to have mercy on himself by having compassion on his child, representing what he would yet suffer if he had to accuse himself of being the occasion of her death, or of driving her wretched husband to some act of desperation, he remained inexorable; and, overcome by grief and despair, the afflicted mother was borne from his presence in a state from which she never recovered.

"Oh God! even at this period my heart becomes chilled by the recollection of what I then suffered—when I heard of the death of the only being that seemed to sympathize in our sufferings—when I thought of what my Julia would feel when she learned the death of her adored mother! But though my very soul was bursting with grief, I was forced to assume an appearance of composure, lest a suspicion of the truth should prove fatal. Through

unceasing care she at length slowly began to recover: as I saw the languor of debility gradually giving way to returning strength, my desolate heart again began to feel something of genial warmth; but the ordeal of suffering was not yet passed through—compared to what I had yet to endure, all that I had as yet experienced was as nothing.

"The rebellion of 1798, the consequences of which are yet in a degree felt in the kingdom, had just about this period broken out. My fosterfather, by this time far stricken in years, was accused of having given shelter to some fugitives from a rebel camp surprised in the neighbourhood; accusation was, at this dreadful period, condemnation, and in terror he fled to me for refuge from torture and death. Oh! need I say that, at the risk of my safety, I promised it—that, as I gazed on his silvered temples—that, as I beheld those eyes so often uplifted to heaven to implore a blessing on me, now dimly

raised in supplication to me—I vowed to shield him from harm, even with my life?

"He was quickly pursued to my dwelling, but, through the vigilance of some humble friends, I had time, ere the party in quest of him arrived, to secrete him within my wife's chamber, almost the only remaining habitable one in the decaying castle of my ancestors, in which necessity had forced me to seek a shelter for her, and which, from her situation and other circumstances, I had reason to hope and believe would be held sacred.

"The officer who commanded the party sent on the search did not disappoint this expectation—he quickly withdrew his men, and I was repairing to my Julia to quiet her apprehensions, when I discovered a man (in the service of Mr. Winterfield, and who, from the most infernal motives, had joined in the pursuit) lurking near the foot of the stairs leading to her chamber. I fiercely demanded his motive for being there; he insolently re-

plied, attempting, as he spoke, to rush past me; a struggle ensued, and, at once alarmed and enraged, I snatched up a blunderbuss, which, for the purpose of self-defence, I had taken the precaution of concealing near the spot, and warned him, as he valued his safety, to retire. He was not to be intimidated, however: rushing on me, he made a desperate effort to wrest the weapon from me; in the attempt it went off, and its contents lodging in his body, he fell.

"The party that had just been drawn off instantly returned, while my wife, and the trembling fugitive with her, forgetting, in their alarm for my safety, every other consideration, came hastening down. At the sight of the latter, a demoniac yell was set up, and seizing him with me, our hands were immediately fettered. Oh! even still I hear the frenzied cries of my beloved, as she beheld the arm that had so long, so softly pillowed her languid head, manacled like that of a felon!—Oh

God! what did I feel, as I heard these cries, as I felt her clinging to my breast, till with brutal violence we were torn asunder—oh, never—never in this world to meet again!

"Punishments were then summary: I was immediately brought to trial, accused of the double crime of rebellion and murder, and sentenced to be shot. In vain I pleaded my innocence; there was no one to confirm the assertion, no one to speak in my favour but my fellow-sufferer, Mr. Winterfield, whom I called upon in this calamitous hour, far from representing as truth required, describing me as a person of a disposition so turbulent, revengeful, and sullen, as fully justified the belief of my being capable of the enormities laid to my charge; thus hoping to find what he had long despaired of doing—an excuse in the public opinion for his treatment of me.

"Inevitable death, therefore, I saw approaching, aggravated in all its horrors by the consideration of my wife. But, as if

this were not enough, I was doomed to be tortured, by witnessing the torture inflicted on the aged and feeble frame of my fosterfather, under the pretext of extorting confession from him. In vain I closed my eyes—I could not exclude the sound of the lash that mangled his flesh and damped his silver locks with the dews of agony—the groans that burst at moments from his feebly-fluttering heart. Oh God! at that moment how did I execrate my species!—But so it has ever been, that man, 'dressed in a little brief authority, plays such tricks before high Heaven as make the angels weep.'

"Overpowered by horror and disgust, I at length fainted; on recovering, as I leant against the grated cill of my window for air, I beheld the body of the poor sufferer thrown lifeless before it. A cry of joy and thanksgiving escaped me at the moment. Dreadful situation! when we are forced by circumstances to rejoice at the death of those who have attached us to life!—I gazed with a kind of savage

exultation on the inanimate remains: the withered breast could feel no further pang —the dim eyes were closed in a sleep that rendered all further cruelty idle.

"But soon every thought, every idea became centered in my wife—oh, woe! oh, anguish unutterable! when I thought of quitting life without knowing her fate —whether I should leave her a widowed and forlorn wretch behind me, or find her a rejoicing angel in heaven before me!— I raved, I gnashed my teeth in writhing agony—I knelt, but in vain, to the soldiers that guarded me, to inform me of her fate.

"But the hour destined by my fellowmen for my last was rapidly approaching —at sunset I was to be taken to execution, and as I saw the glorious luminary rapidly sinking behind the hills, I strove to detach my thoughts from this world, and lift them up in prayer. Suddenly a dreadful tumult was heard: a party of rebels poured unexpectedly into the village where I was confined, and which was but

a small one poorly defended, and, forcing the prison, liberated me. Scarcely was I sensible of my deliverance, when I was asked to join the conquering party; but from friend or foe I would alike have fled at the moment—my soul was on the wing to my beloved, and bursting through all opposition, I was quickly on my way to her.

"Night was by this time glooming around, and the night-wind, beginning to sigh through the long grass of the heath —all nature seemed to lower around me, and though I fled forward, it was without the stimulus of hope; all to my misgiving soul seemed heightened gloom and desolation, as I approached the Castle—fearful the cries of the birds that flapped their dusky wings amidst the moss-clad battlements—mournfully-hollow the sound of the recoiling surge that beat against the cliffs! I paused—I lingered for some time amidst the dark shadows of the pile, wishing to know the worst, yet wanting courage to ascertain it: at length I forced

myself on. God of heaven! as I turned the dusky tower that hid it from my view, what was my transport to behold, contrary to my hope or expectation, a light gleaming in the bower of beauty, in the sanctuary of my love! Eagerly I admitted myself; but——"

Here the sudden uplifting of Fidelia's hand motioned him to silence, for at this instant she distinctly heard a noise at the door of communication between the other tower and the tapestry-chamber. To hesitate about repairing to it was not to be thought of, lest inquiries or conjectures might be excited by the circumstance that might add to her embarrassments; accordingly, in few words intimating to him what she feared and thought, she hastened to it, and only delayed opening the door and admitting Mrs. Stovendale till assured of his having effected his retreat. This assurance, however, could not quiet her nerves, and the confusion and tremor she was in were not lessened by the look with which Mrs. Stovendale re-

garded her, as she entered and glanced round the apartment, since by it led to fear she had heard other footsteps than hers.

Whatever she heard, or fancied she had heard, Mrs. Stovendale said nothing more at the moment, than that she believed she had surprised her; for which, however, she added, some books she had just received, and thought would amuse her, must be her excuse.

Fidelia endeavouring to collect herself to express her grateful sense of this kindness, followed her to the room she had just left; but what was her confusion, when, on entering it, she saw she had omitted to replace the chairs on which she and the stranger had been sitting at the fire, and which, by the manner in which they were placed, gave but too evident an intimation of some other person than herself having been recently there!

Mrs. Stovendale could not pass over such a circumstance—it confirmed the suspicion (which had involuntarily started

at the hesitation there had been to admit her, or rather at the uncommon circumstance of the door of communication being fastened) of the sophistry of Grandison having prevailed on Fidelia to grant him an interview; and in believing that he had been her recent companion, she was also led to believe that the recent interview between them had not been quite so accidental as Fidelia had asserted—one doubt and one suspicion ever giving rise to others. To think she was deceived where she had reposed such confidence, that the warning received of Grandison had failed of having its due effect upon the mind of Fidelia, hurt and alarmed her beyond expression, and, after a momentary hesitation, she candidly avowed what she thought and feared.

Fidelia was on the point of asserting her innocence, when she was checked by the reflection of being unable to deny, if closely questioned on the subject, that, if not Grandison, some other person had been with her. But her hesitation was

but momentary—she could not bring herself to rest under a suspicion so revolting to her pride and delicacy.

But, transient as her hesitation to vindicate herself had been, it had had the effect of rendering the attempt more difficult; and with pain she saw that, except allowed to be more explicit with Mrs. Stovendale than she now was, there was a chance of her confidence never being wholly recovered. Whether this would ever be the case, she could not at the present moment surmise; for the present she was bound to secrecy by the stranger, and whether he would yet permit her to speak of him was more than as yet she could conjecture.

Deeply she now regretted not having learned the whole of his story, from the added difficulty she was now aware would attend any further communication with him. But the idea of this could not deter her from resolving to seek for it, anxious as she was to learn by what means he had

become interested about her, and trusting as she did, by his explanation on that subject, to obtain some clue at least for the discovery of her birth. But from what difficulties, what embarrassments would not his allowing her to mention him to Mrs. Stovendale relieve her! She determined, when next they met, to reveal her wishes explicitly to him on the subject, with a hope that the character of Mrs. Stovendale would be a strong inducement to him to comply with them. But how to obtain an opportunity for this was the point; and from her uncertainty as to where or when she should see him again, she lamented not having tried to settle ere they parted.

In the mean time she firmly resolved, should an unlucky chance again throw her in the way of Grandison, to let no prayers, no supplications induce her to listen for another moment to him, trusting by this decided conduct to retrieve in a degree, if she could not entirely regain, the confidence of Mrs. Stovendale; and

indeed, exclusive of this inducement to it, she was impelled by her own feelings of propriety. Yet hard and difficult was it for her to believe that Grandison was a character that ought to be shunned: but the more plausible, the more specious he was, the more dangerous; and, as had recently been observed to her, perfectly was she aware that it is by discrediting the warning voice of caution and experience so many of her sex have reason to rue the perfidy of men.

END OF VOL. II.

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